

## New music and the press: Vienna 1896–7, Bruckner, Dvořák, the Laodiceans and Also *Sprach Zarathustra*

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From 1860 to about 1900 the most feared personage in the musical life of Vienna was Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904). Today he is remembered above all for having belittled Wagner, Bruckner and Hugo Wolf. Hanslick built his prestige on feuilletons that appeared in the *Neue Freie Presse*, two to five days after the concerts in question. ...

Hanslick indulged to the full the tastes and foibles of cultivated Vienna. He dressed like a dandy, took snuff, courted the ladies while telling the latest anecdotes, and delighted in playing Strauss waltzes. Whenever his vanity was piqued, charm turned to sarcasm. Preferring Italian opera and French orchestral music, Hanslick nurtured implacable hostility to Wagner, whom he accused of debasing music.<sup>1</sup>

This characterization of Hanslick is from a major text on intellectual history, William M. Johnston's *The Austrian Mind*. It is not very complimentary; nor is it particularly accurate. Johnston fires slightly awry in characterizing Hanslick as preferring Italian opera: certainly his operatic ideal was Italianate in the importance it placed on vocal melody, but the exemplar of this ideal was Mozart. Hanslick's attitude to the nineteenth-century Italian school was basically hostile and reflected, at least in part, the basic Austro-German musical chauvinism which characterized much of Viennese taste in his time, when the Court Opera had few nineteenth-century Italian operas in its repertory. So far as instrumental music is concerned, his taste was basically Germanic, even if it did not embrace all compositional trends in this category.

Despite numerous contributions (such as the important one of Leon Botstein<sup>2</sup>) towards the rescue of Vienna from the reputation it has earned from scholars such as Johnston, in English-speaking countries in particular the situation still persists in which an undergraduate who writes that Wagner had no advocates in the Viennese press until Hugo Wolf and that Hanslick ruled the roost in a culture of frivolity cannot in fairness be marked down. After all, even William Johnston had made the same mistake when using Hanslick as an example

in illustrating a wider trend in the Viennese mentality which he encapsulates thus:

Two attitudes interacted in the outlook of most Viennese: lighthearted enjoyment of the arts, or aestheticism, and indifference to political and social reform, or therapeutic nihilism.<sup>3</sup>

Like a kind of latter-day Alexander Gibbon, Johnston chronicles the decline and fall of the Habsburg Empire. As is often found in histories, weak rule or, as in this case, dynastic decline, goes hand in hand with a great flourishing of the arts. As if to cover himself against the accusation that he simply regards all interest in the arts as frivolous, however, Johnston characterizes the aestheticism which he considers so decadent as 'light-hearted'. And this is where the image of Hanslick the dandy — and a fearsome old dandy at that — comes in so useful.

Leon Botstein took Johnston briefly to task, arguing, among other details not relevant to the present discussion, that:

Johnston's description of music criticism makes the assumption that Hanslick represented the world of music journalism in the period. Music criticism in Vienna was far more diverse and the influence and range of its writers greater than Johnston suspects. Hanslick did not rule Viennese taste.<sup>4</sup>

My argument, however, is not so much with Johnston, or with any intellectual or social historian whose cursory treatment of music in Vienna at the turn of the century leaves too much unsaid, but with Johnston's (and many others') source. This source is Max Graf (1873–1958), who opens his *Composer and Critic: Two Hundred Years of Music Criticism* with a presentation of his credentials which begins:

From 1890 to 1938 I was a music critic in Vienna.<sup>5</sup>

Not continuously, however, since during the period which I have taken as a core-sample — the fifteen months from October 1896 to the end of 1897 — there are no signs of his having been active

in Vienna but plenty of his being active in Paris.<sup>7</sup> This brief absence, however, is not sufficient cause to discredit his witness; his bias gives better cause. How Graf saw the situation in 1897 may be deduced from his 'Brahms Study', published in *Wagner Probleme und Andere Studien*.<sup>8</sup> It begins with a critique of journalism:

Modern culture begins in the world beyond journalism. Here I mean journalism in the broadest sense of the term: the manner of conduct of life, the thought and artistic sensibility of bourgeois society. In the conduct of life journalism appears as a total lack of any religious or metaphysical sensibility, any personal experience, of any hearkening to inner or outer voices, of any contemplation and any self-consciousness. In thought it appears as a superficial realism, which takes things as they appear to the fleeting glance and reckons their value according to the necessities of the moment. In artistic sensibility: as a lack of any feeling for the eternal wellsprings of art, which is indeed the sound- or form-generating life-blood of the artist. In a word, journalism as life, thought and sensibility is without perspective, without depth, without presentiment...

Three things are characteristic of modern culture. It is revolutionary: it must do battle against the most fearful might of the smallest, most narrow-minded, most mendacious minds. It is metaphysical: full of consciousness of the sanctity of everything in the world and the innermost streams of life. It is heroic, from an increased consciousness of the value of the inner life. All the great leaders of the new culture display these characteristics more or less sharply. ... They are all distinguished by the hatred and hostility of the journalistic world and its literary spokesmen.<sup>9</sup>

Graf writes here with all the hot-headedness of youth, as a modernist seeking to defend the validity of his own artistic standards while the tastes of the previous generation still dominate. His tirade recalls Richard Wagner's own attacks on music journalism and can be regarded as a deliberate use of Wagnerian imagery. This introduction, however, is in the manner of a generalization prefacing an attack on a particular target, Eduard Hanslick, who embodied all that Graf regarded as characteristic of 'journalism', while he saw Brahms's friendship with him as an inexplicable blot on the character of an otherwise great composer.

Perhaps the most problematic item in Graf's description of modern culture is his claim that it is 'metaphysical'; this sharply contradicts the widely-held view that thought of the turn of the century

was characterized more by positivism,<sup>10</sup> while Nietzsche's writings were taken up in literary circles. Furthermore, in *Composer and Critic*, a work of his American exile half a century later, we find a clue to what Graf had meant by 'metaphysical' in his reminiscences of Anton Bruckner's harmony lectures:

Mysticism also prevailed in his lectures on harmony and counterpoint. The laws of tones and their association were for him infinite laws. The fundamental steps of the bass had in his mind a cosmic importance. ... They were the path to the Kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup>

Graf leaves us with no doubt that he was captivated as much by Bruckner's personality as his music. Bruckner dominated Graf's outlook in the 1890s, to be superseded in 1900 by his attraction to the 'beautiful' and 'serious' eyes of Sigmund Freud, which 'seemed to look at a man from the depths'.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter Graf was a committed Freudian, analysing music and composers from a psychoanalytic perspective of the most romantic kind.<sup>13</sup> Such is our principal eye-witness.

It was under the influence of Bruckner, about whom nothing, with the possible exception of his music, was modern, that Graf resolved to become a music critic. As he recalls:

I wanted to fight against the sensual conservatism of Vienna, which tried to bar the great musicians of our day, abusing Wagner and Liszt, deriding Bruckner, silencing Hugo Wolf. Conservative music criticism—there was no other in the great Viennese dailies of that period—tried to place all modern music under interdict. ...

There was plenty of work needed to bring fresh air into the old musical city, where critics and musical society were one in imprudence and superficiality, in delight in easy pleasure, witty frivolity, and clever small talk. I was young, enthusiastic, excited, full of energy. So I fitted my first arrow to the bow and began shooting.

Graf then continues by describing his first article, an attack on Hanslick, and his second, an attack on Max Kalbeck, a man very much in Hanslick's circle and a friend and later biographer of Brahms. In his treatment of criticism in Vienna, Graf mentions, in addition to Hanslick and Kalbeck, Ludwig Speidel, Richard Heuberger and Robert Hirschfeld. He mentions that:

At a time when Bruckner was still being laughed at in Vienna, Speidel wrote poetic essays on the marvellous landscape in which Bruckner's music had grown up like a forest or an orchard.<sup>14</sup>

This is the only concession he makes to the existence of support for Bruckner prior to his own entry into critical activity. As it was, Speidel, while otherwise as 'conservative' and anti-Wagnerian as Hanslick, had been a consistent admirer of Bruckner since he first encountered him as an organist. Heuberger formed a trio with Hanslick and Kalbeck and the three are often mentioned together; an engineer turned composer, he was not their match as a writer, but one should not write him off. Finally, we have Robert Hirschfeld, of whom Graf writes respectfully as 'the first critic who dared to cross swords with Hanslick',<sup>15</sup> without explaining that the pamphlet in which he did so (*Das kritische Verfahren Ed. Hanslick's*, 1885) concerned primarily Hanslick's expressed opinions on Renaissance vocal music; everything in the context given by Graf would lead the reader to suppose that Hirschfeld was taking up arms on behalf of Wagner or of modernism. Graf admits that 'these men were all solid musicians and brilliant writers'.<sup>16</sup> Then he demolishes their credibility:

Like every refined society that has taste and a tradition, Viennese society between 1867 and 1914 was responsive to style, to the personal in writing, to grace and wit. Readers were inclined to lay less stress on accurate judgment than on stylistic graces. ... They even preferred a quite unprincipled cynicism spiced with literary charm to the utmost learning without literary grace. Wit and intelligence of the kind that shone and entertained at cafes and social gatherings were never absent from Vienna's newspapers. Nor were they lacking among Vienna's music critics. It was precisely this superficial Viennese wit that, being itself sterile, regularly turned against such great artists as Wagner, Bruckner, and Mahler. But Vienna loved to play; and even seriousness had to smile in order to impress.<sup>17</sup>

Graf proceeds to grant an inordinate amount of space to the critical career of Hugo Wolf, which ran for only three years in the mid-1880s. Apart from his veiled reference to Speidel's attitude to Bruckner and his confusing mention of Hirschfeld, this is the only acknowledgement he makes of the existence of critics who took a line opposed to that of Hanslick.

That Hanslick was not the only music critic in Vienna can be seen from the Table 1 of the fifteen dailies, five weeklies and three specialist music journals which published music criticism in the period under consideration, with the names of their most prominent critics (see Table 1).<sup>18</sup>

Despite the dominance of the Christian Social party in contemporary politics, the largest circulation figures are to be found in the liberal group of papers. The Viennese, it seems, kept their taste in journalism separate from their political views. The *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* was a tabloid with pictures, the only true pictorial among its contemporaries, and doubtless owed its large circulation to that. The *Neues Wiener Journal*, while more a broadsheet in format, was a 'women's' paper of largely tabloid content, with the odd engraving here and there. At the opposite end of the intellectual and literary spectrum, the *Neue Freie Presse* and *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* were serious broadsheets which took great pains to maintain a high literary standard. The music criticism of these latter was dominated by Eduard Hanslick and Max Kalbeck, close associates of Brahms (and indeed of each other), so Graf is at least right when he complains that 'conservative music criticism' was all there was to be found in 'the great Viennese dailies'. The 'great' dailies, however, were not the only papers, and their critics, who, regardless of their opinions were arguably the best writers in the Viennese critical community at the time, were far from the only critics. The following table lists in order of age the critics about whom such a detail can be known:

Table 2: Critics by Age at Birthday in 1896

70+:	Hanslick, 71;
60+:	Woerz, 67; Speidel, 66;
50+:	Schoenaich, 56; Scheu, 55; Helm, 53;
40+:	Gaigg von Bergheim, 48; Heuberger, 46; Kalbeck, 46; Bricht, 44; Kralik, 44; Kauders, 42; Kapff, 41;
30+:	Hirschfeld, 39; Lvovský, 39; Horn, 36; Wallaschek, 36; Steininger, 35; Keller, 34 ; Puchstein, 31; Reinhardt, 31; Karpath, 30;
20+:	Schenker, 28.

In general, the papers with the most healthy circulation figures and which offered critics the best opportunity to disseminate their views put 'senior' men in charge of music criticism, a practice which would tend to lead to 'conservatism' simply because their views were the views of an older generation. Given the highly Wagnerian tone of Graf's protest against 'journalism', it is instructive to categorize them according to their opinions

Journal	Approx. Circulation	Music Critics
<b>i Specialist Music Journals</b>		
<i>Deutsche Kunst- und Musikzeitung</i>	3000	Otto Keller Otto von Kapff
<i>Neue Musikalische Presse</i>		Robert Hirschfeld Gustav Schoenaich
<i>Österreichische Musik- und Theater-Zeitung</i>		Brzetislav Lvovský Theodor Helm
<b>ii Daily Papers</b>		
<b>(a) Liberal, Non-Political and Progressive</b>		
<i>Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt</i>	40,000	Dr. K. St.
<i>Neue Freie Presse</i>	45,000	Eduard Hanslick Richard Heuberger
<i>Österreichische Volks-Zeitung</i>	23,000	Balduin Bricht
<i>Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	15,000	K. Anders (=A. Kauders)
<b>(b) Official (Govt.)</b>		
<i>Fremden-Blatt</i>	21,000	Ludwig Speidel
<i>Wiener Abendpost</i>	9,500	Robert Hirschfeld
<b>(c) Social-Democratic</b>		
<i>Arbeiter-Zeitung</i>	20,000 (?)	Josef Scheu
<b>(d) Christian-Social</b>		
<i>Reichspost</i>	5,500	Fritz Gaigg von Bergheim
<b>(e) Catholic-Conservative</b>		
<i>Das Vaterland</i>		Richard Kralik
<b>(f) German Nationalist</b>		
<i>Deutsches Volksblatt</i>	25,000	Camillo Horn Hans Puchstein
<i>Deutsche Zeitung</i>	14,000	Theodor Helm
<i>Ostdeutsche Rundschau</i>	7,000	Hagen
<b>iii Weeklies</b>		
<i>Extrapost</i>		Moriz Baumfeld Conrad Dohany Heinrich Reinhardt
<i>Wiener Neueste Nachrichten</i>		Emil Maria Steininger
<i>Wiener Salonblatt</i>		Various, generally pseudonymous
<i>Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung</i>	24,000	Hofrat J.G. von Woerz
<i>Die Zeit</i>		Richard Wallaschek
<b>iv Literary Journals</b>		
<i>Neue Revue</i>		Heinrich Schenker

Table 1: Journals publishing music criticism in Vienna, 1896–7

of Wagner, who is generally regarded as the chief representative of the 'progressive' movement in music of the mid-century, when the oldest of the critics were beginning their careers.

Hanslick's opinion of Wagner is well known. Woerz and Speidel were themselves of the anti-Wagnerian persuasion, but remained independent of Hanslick's 'party'. Speidel in particular is interesting on account of his support for Bruckner,<sup>19</sup> which represents an early break in the familiar Wagner-Bruckner nexus. Scheu, Schoenaich and Helm, the men in their fifties, were all Wagnerians and champions also of Liszt and Bruckner. In addition, however, all were highly respectful of Brahms, the darling of the 'conservatives'. Schoenaich called Brahms the best composer after Wagner, thereby relegating Bruckner to a lower position.<sup>20</sup> Helm admitted a preference for Bruckner's symphonies over those of Brahms.<sup>21</sup> He was a long-time champion of Bruckner whose existence Graf does not bother to admit at all. Helm's reputation was compromised, however, by the unfortunate political associations of the *Deutsche Zeitung*. As a strong supporter of young composers, especially those who claimed Wagnerian allegiance, he comes across as something of a Hans Sachs figure, supporting the right of young composers to write as they wish, while tending himself at times to be more resigned than enthusiastic.

Of the men in their forties: Gaigg seems tolerant, even supportive, of Wagner, but tends also to write in terms of 'classical form' and 'classical beauty'; in short, more evidence is required to categorize him definitely. Heuberger completes the trio begun by Hanslick and Kalbeck. He excited his opponents by writing some uncomplimentary comments about Bruckner in obituaries; Kalbeck, like Hanslick, had avoided writing an obituary for Bruckner at all. In 1896, Kalbeck was still firing shots at Wagner, such as this one:

When one has not heard Wagner's *Siegfried* for a long time, one looks forward to the next long pause in which one will not hear it. The enjoyment granted us by some splendid parts of the great final duet is bought at too high a cost with the oppressive boredom of the rest of the work. O to be able to sleep until the middle of the third act like lucky Brünnhilde!<sup>22</sup>

It might be argued that Kalbeck was having a joke more at his expense than Wagner's; he must have known that the battle had been lost ere he had

entered it, for there had never been any question of Wagner's place in the repertory of the Court Opera.

Bricht is a kind of moderate Wagnerian, writing in a tabloid, while Kauders is a politically liberal Wagnerian writing in a women's paper. Kralik had survived a strongly ideologically Wagnerian youth, proceeding from episodes of Marxism and nihilism to emerge as a Catholic-Conservative; he retained his love of Wagner and reverence for Liszt as well as an obsession with Berlioz. Kapff does not seem to have anything against Wagner, but he writes of 'Wagnerians' as if they constituted a group to which he did not belong.<sup>23</sup>

The men in their thirties and (as in Graf's case) younger, if educated in Vienna, had learned their harmony from Bruckner and their aesthetics from Hanslick, with interesting results. Hirschfeld had been supervised by Hanslick when writing his doctoral thesis, but had always had an affection for Wagner and Bruckner. His career has been covered by Leon Botstein, who noted that his 'conservatism' increased as he grew older. Lvovsky, who was born and educated in Prague, is probably the most consistently modern in his musical taste, independent of the ideological underpinning of German-nationalist inspired Wagnerism. Wallaschek is the sole representative of the positivist philosophical stream at the forefront of Viennese thought; he was tolerant of Wagner's music but rejected his theories and regarded the state of greatest musical perfection as lying in absolute music. Horn and Puchstein are two very young men (of whom Puchstein, the younger, held the superior position) in a paper of moderately large circulation. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that the strident and ugly German nationalism which the *Deutsches Volksblatt* espoused was gaining its following principally among the young; they were far more at home in the *Deutsches Volksblatt* than Helm was in the *Deutsche Zeitung*. A characteristic of this 1890s-Wagnerism is an open hostility to Brahms unknown among the old Wagnerians.

Of the new music in Vienna, plenty was by minor (generally local) composers; what is remarkable is the way that critics seemed to recognize minor composers and give them a polite, if lukewarm reception. Of course, most music by minor composers does not survive beyond the generation in which it was written. Occasionally,

a critic seemed to find it necessary to remind his readers, or even himself, of this or a related fact. This, for example, is what Gustav Schoenaich had to say about Volkmann's Serenade no. 3 in D minor for Cello and Strings, performed at the first Philharmonic concert:

Volkmann's piece, in many ways finely constructed and well-sounding, belongs to that genus of superfluous music, with which we can establish no proper relationship. It tells us nothing which we did not already know and much which we no longer believe.<sup>24</sup>

When the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* performed excerpts from the oratorio *Das Weltgericht*<sup>25</sup> by Josef Vockner, successor to Bruckner at the Conservatory, Kalbeck was moved to comment:

Vockner's eternal bliss, ... a homophonic chorus with flute and harp accompaniment, has little that is enticing, and the reunion of those awakened to new life is celebrated in quite a reserved way, as if the composer shared the sceptic's secret fear of meeting in the hereafter the same professional representatives of officially licensed boredom who substantially ease our departure from this life. Only in the thematically interesting fugal 'Angels' Chorus', which also sounds jolly good, did the musician come to prominence who bears a piece of heaven in his breast and the man of whom one notes that he is called to teach others because he has himself learned something.<sup>26</sup>

Poor Vockner! Nevertheless, he did rate a little praise at the end for having a piece of heaven—presumably the spark of genius—in his breast, although the suggestion that he would make a good teacher could well have been the last nail in the coffin of his composing ambitions. Kalbeck's skill at invective was such that he could have been even more unrelenting had he wished. The essential quality of this music is its lukewarm blandness, a quality which not only Kalbeck but also Schoenaich and all the others seemed to notice. Music which was sufficiently original to be important, however, could not be so lightly dismissed.

And so we come to the work which is the focus of this paper, Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, whose first performance in Vienna was given on 21 March 1897 by the Philharmonic under the direction of Hans Richter. The audience 'laughed at the cock's crow of the trumpet and hissed at the end'.<sup>27</sup> That, at least, is how Max Graf (who was probably in Paris) remembers it. Al-

though there is scant evidence for the laughter, there is ample for the hissing. How the critics recorded the audience's reaction seems to vary, however, and Heuberger and Hanslick would have us believe that such applause as there was belonged not to the work but to the performers:

(Heuberger): The reception of the novelty was quite peculiar ... Then some dared to set about applauding, upon which, hissing, then—as always in such cases—more applause and more hissing; finally nearly the whole hall hissed, only then—as Richter pointed towards the Philharmonic,—just as unanimously to applaud.<sup>28</sup>

(Hanslick): Tumultuously raged the unceasing applause, in the end softened by courageous hissing. For my part, the success was more attributable to the orchestra than to the composer; for I can hardly imagine that our public can really draw enjoyment and inspiration from this chaotic witches' cauldron.<sup>29</sup>

Lvovský, in contrast, produced the smallest estimate of the number of hissers in the audience:

Not once could a couple of idiots who thought it good to hiss childishly in the storm of acclaim which this creation captured—not once could these intellectually crippled seedlings from the conservative nursery spoil this impression for me. ... *Also sprach Zarathustra* is a magnificent success; the isolated hisses of the aforementioned street urchins were silenced by continually renewed storms of applause.<sup>30</sup>

Hagen, whose reaction is a little nearer to lukewarm than we might normally expect of such a committed German-nationalist Wagnerian to a composer identifiably in the same tradition, attributes the hissing to philistinism:

There are still not a few musical Philistines for whom even the name 'programme music' is like a red rag to a bull. Now, when the idea of a work of programme music is at all developed with reckless boldness, as in Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, then the indignation of that narrow-hearted member of the party of the eternal yesterday knows no bounds. Who knows whether the brilliant Munich composer would not have been lynched, had he personally conducted in the last Philharmonic concert?<sup>31</sup>

The accusation of philistinism is also invoked by Helm, who suggests that the hissing was not confined to the small number which Lvovský's comment implies:

The work, whose unbelievable difficulties were surmounted by the Philharmonic in truly admirable fashion, would have had, on the average, a

middling success, had not some of the totally cultured, probably from annoyance that they had been disturbed out of their digestive snoozes, believed that they must vent their outrage through hissing. The result was the sudden breaking off of a storm of applause.<sup>32</sup>

Such evidence as there is for laughter is to be found in more poetic sources. Kalbeck responded to *Zarathustra* by devoting an entire feuilleton, some 1500 words, to a parody of Nietzsche, called 'Zarathustra and Struthiocamelus', in which Struthiocamelus, or Strauss, appears after Zarathustra, or Wagner, becoming the 'Supermusician':

Struthiocamelus, the Supermusician, had to come to finish the holy work of Zarathustra. ...

The Supermusician needs no education and respects no law. He makes inroads into the most foreign harmonies, violates euphony and murders melody; as he is the lord of his art and can make with it what pleases him.<sup>33</sup>

At the end of the feuilleton Kalbeck described the audience's reaction:

Many lost their hearing, many their reason, and all their patience. For the world-redemption of the Supermusician was very fundamental, detailed, thorough and deep. ('Yes, indeed, joy wants eternity!') When the double bassists had finally droned out their low C, which still did not want to resolve with the B of the rest of the orchestra and blend with the perfect harmony of the unison, the gentlemen and ladies looked baffled. What Zarathustra spake and what Struthiocamelus poeticized in tones, no-one had taken in. The mouth of Zarathustra and Struthiocamelus was not for these ears. But some 'higher men' had at least learned laughter from the orchestra, so that the Supermusician attained one of his mystic purposes.

'I pronounce laughter holy.'  
Thus spake Zarathustra.<sup>34</sup>

Such arrogance from a critic in condemning the perceived arrogance of a composer was not left unanswered by Strauss's supporters. Arthur Barde, the resident poet of the *Österreichische Musik- und Theater-Zeitung*, was enlisted by Lvovský to respond in kind. He produced in his article a parody of some of Kalbeck's parody, which ended like this:

Then a deaf, funny little fellow stepped forward, held his hands over his ears, so that one might believe him to be insulted in his hearing, and said: I speak to the majority, for I presume that

the majority understands just as little as do I. Safety and security are only in shallowness, for where it is truly *shallow*, there all *dunderheads* feel well. *What I do not understand and the crowd does not understand is nothing!* Why go to any trouble? Truly I say to you, the simple in spirit are the majority, and I am the critic for the majority. I stand high over the critics who in their self-conceit of understanding look down arrogantly on the crowd.—I teach you the Supercritic. Music is something which must be overcome! and I, the *Supercritic*, am in my job, for I satisfy the chief prerequisite: *I have ears, but they hear not.*

They have something of which they are proud. They call it education; it distinguishes them from the goatherds. But I, the Supercritic, have thrown this something from me and I can become rough and common like a goatherd!

'I pronounce laughter holy.'  
Thus spake Zarathustra.<sup>35</sup>

And so we meet the familiar taunt of the advocates of new and difficult music, that those who don't like it don't understand it. Such a taunt easily silences all but the most foolhardy opposition.

*Also sprach Zarathustra* is probably the most radically 'modern' work to have been performed in Vienna in 1897. Although this led in the main to critical reactions which belong more in the discussion of aesthetics than of Wagnerian artistic politics, an examination of its reviews from the latter standpoint still bears some fruit. Helm, for example, quite clearly attributed the adverse audience reaction to its conservative composition.

Allegiance to Wagner, which had been the standard ticket to membership of music's progressive 'party', was no longer necessarily enough to inspire a similar loyalty to Strauss, at least to the Strauss of *Zarathustra*. While Helm and Horn<sup>36</sup> in the German-nationalist press are, as might be expected, full of praise, Hagen is clearly uncomfortable with the work, although mindful of where his allegiance should lie. He praises Strauss's technical ability (as does nearly everyone else), but is concerned that the technique of instrumentation 'which should be only a means, has become an end in itself'.<sup>37</sup> When he describes the Dance Scene as 'the Venusberg music translated into Cannibalese',<sup>38</sup> it seems as if he is barely restraining himself from breaking ranks.

The matter of means and ends is frequently raised in criticism of new music. In the specific case of Strauss, not only his skill at orchestration,

but also his general—and undisputed—technical accomplishment aroused critical responses which are interesting in their variety. Otto von Kapff, for example, viewed Strauss's technique with:

not only a respect for the external structure and technique of the working-out, for the violins, frequently *divisi* à8, the violas and cellos à6 and the double basses à4 etc., for the colossal orchestral apparatus, which was enlarged by the organ, a glockenspiel and a bell, before the sovereign and purposeful mastery of all harmonic and contrapuntal devices, but also for the strong musical-idealistic *will*, which was expressed in these strong material *capabilities*.<sup>39</sup>

Despite all attempts at claiming otherwise, however, Kapff limits his praise to technique alone. For critics who were less concerned with being polite, who were not afraid of the reproaches of the progressively-inclined, respect for technical accomplishment soon turned to reproach of artistic arrogance. For, just like virtuosic display for its own sake by performers, demonstration of creative skill by composers harnessed to no apparent—or no approved—artistic end, be that the expression of extramusical ideas or the articulation of a cogent and rounded musical form, was generally regarded as a debasement of music. A composer had to use his skill in the service of art; he must not use art as a vehicle for display of his skill. Thus we find Hanslick praising Dvořák's String Quartet, op. 105, as:

Sound, clear and impressive, without becoming banal, brilliant without vain bizarreness, this work belongs among the best of this composer.<sup>40</sup>

The notion of the bizarre and sensationalism is also found in Kalbeck's lament over a perceived squandering of talent in some of Strauss's songs:

What a shame that so much young talent, in seeking to gain a reputation among the sensation-hungry crowd, has abandoned itself to bizarre fatuousness.<sup>41</sup>

Even Dvořák, the darling of the 'Brahms-party', was not immune to criticism, especially when he ventured into programme music. The Philharmonic's performance of the symphonic poem *The Noon Witch*, op. 108, prompted Hirschfeld to denounce Dvořák's display of technique for its own sake in the following terms:

Dvořák has reached such a level of technique that in defiance of all aesthetics he proclaims, 'I can do everything I want to do.' Of course, aesthetics replies, 'But I do not want everything

that he can do,' and hopes that this kind of musical painting will remain only an interesting episode, a test of strength of orchestral expressive capability in Dvořák's creativity.<sup>42</sup>

The following description, by Kalbeck, of Dvořák's op. 107, demonstrates how, to the 'conservatives', form was the necessary companion of colour:

The arduously brushed-together or even boldly daubed tone paintings of the much admired modern colourists must pale before the instrumental luminosity of *The Water Goblin*; for here the fiery radiance breaks through from within and the colour is what it should always be, warmed and quickened form.<sup>43</sup>

Returning to *Also sprach Zarathustra* and bearing in mind the importance of form, we may regard form as present in spirit as the element which Hanslick regarded as improperly replaced by colour:

The composition, uncommonly weak and tortured as a musical invention, is actually just a cunning orchestral piece, a resounding intoxication with colour. Certainly the piece is interesting and entertaining as a brilliant combination of new and original, but also adventurous and offensive sound effects. But this fabulous orchestral technique was, I feel, less a means for the composer than an end and chief purpose.<sup>44</sup>

And so the argument returns to the matter of means and ends. The improper subordination of the former to the latter results, as Hirschfeld saw it, in anarchy:

All head first, head last, feet first, feet last; finally B major and C collide, so that one can take a C for a B and a B for a C, what in Strauss's circles is known as 'the world-riddle'. From such explosions we are to read Nietzsche's 'Superman'! Indeed, even sparks of genius, lit up by this musical blasting operation, flash out over the madness of the symphonic hinterworldlings. But this brilliance arouses horror; for we are at the end of music, with a music which seems ultimately to have been created only for Zarathustra's serpent and eagle. We are not yet mature enough for this 'dance', and if we come to maturity—what use is it to us? Then another Superman sat down again on these Supermen and divided the violins into thirty-two, blew sixteen horns and let the tubas trill. ... Strauss says proudly: "This is *my* counterpoint!" And no-one can argue this counterpoint away. In a while others will come and say, "This is also *our* counterpoint!" and before you can turn round, it will be everyone's counterpoint. The 'stay-behinds' who cannot fly after the *Capellmeister*



of new Germany will clamour in vain. Admonition does not help and is ridiculous. Art must look after itself. If it won't or can't, then the way is very free for the Strausses. Hail!<sup>45</sup>

Such arrogance, it seems, is not the proper attitude of a composer.

Kralik, as much a Wagnerian as Hirschfeld, was also uncomfortable with Strauss's latest creation, beginning with its extramusical inspiration; he made use of the rift between Nietzsche and Wagner to serve his Catholic-conservative ends, opposing Wagnerism rather than Catholicism to the philosopher of the Superman, remarking on Strauss:

The funniest thing is that now a representative of hyper-Wagnerian music should make music, with all the extravagance of every artistic means and trick, out of the philosophy of this opponent of all profound music, this modest admirer of the shallowest of musical treats.<sup>46</sup>

He is ready to admit that Strauss, Richter and the Philharmonic are 'artists', but denies that *Zarathustra* is a work of art:

The performance of the tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* by Richard Strauss must have opened eyes to the characteristic one-sidedness of our time: a quite unprecedented development of all technical, external, formal and virtuosic means, an effeminate abandon to all nervous sensation, but with it an absolute lack of sensible moderation, of a deep consciousness of a goal, of a mastery of self and of the uncontrolled artistic medium, of feelings and urges, the lack of a manly strength of will, of an artistic ethos. In a word, we have splendidly schooled, virtuosic and highly receptive artists, but we can neither see nor hear any work of art. Everything is there, rich and overflowing, but the essence is lacking, the core, the insight, the feeling and the gravity, which are its point of focus. We breathe the air of the studio, but not the breath of truth. It is coquetry with art, but not love.<sup>47</sup>

He can find only one good thing to say about the music of Strauss: 'it is not boring, it is even entertaining'.<sup>48</sup> Despite this final ironic quip, however, Kralik was not being superficial; he had a deep respect for music's sanctity and a profound sense of the critic's, as well as the composer's, responsibility towards art. When commenting on the nature of the critic's role, in response to a question asked by the *Neue Musikalische Presse*, Kralik argued that the critic should be not the judge and executioner of art, but its director of protocol, while his motto should always be the following lines of Goethe:

Strength must we summon up, and high assurance,  
And what's to come, let come, with firm endurance.  
Indeed your courage ever has been high.  
Most frightful fate approaches, to afflict us;  
Men, and posterity will contradict us:  
Write down true record that shall testify.<sup>49</sup>

Two months before the *Zarathustra* première, Kralik had expressed his views concerning music's future. He regarded modern composers in general as having become bogged down in stultifying epigonism:

These moderns do not see that even they, in the same way as the classicists and the romantics, have sunk into an epigonism of genius which is, like any epigonism, untrue, affected, put on, transitory. They believe themselves to be making now the music of the future, but all they are making is the music of the past—of the forties and fifties. What was true and living then is now no more so. If geniuses such as Liszt, Wagner and Berlioz could be reborn today, surely they would do anything rather than imitate themselves. On the contrary, they would seek and find new means of expression and new ideals for the new age. And they would probably have to undergo the same sort of martyrdom as before until they had persuaded loyal and staunch Lisztians and Wagnerians that the time had come to tune the lyre to the new and different. ... But it is necessary, as in all art, that not a man of action, but a genius go to the head of a new movement.<sup>50</sup>

However he may have disapproved of the 'progress' made by Strauss, Kralik seems resigned to the expectation that a real musical innovator, a pioneering genius, will not meet with immediate acceptance.

Replying to the numerous detractors of *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Lvovský argued:

As far as the musical structure of this tone-poem is concerned, not even the most determined opponent would be able to accuse it of confusion and formlessness. The thematic working-out is executed with clarity and compelling logic and it is astonishing how Strauss managed to press all these enormous contrapuntal and thematic combinations into the service of his ideas.<sup>51</sup>

Thematic relationships, in particular the transformations of the opening motive, dominate in underpinning his argument. To justify a new musical work by employing any kind of analysis is an admission at least in part of the theoretical underpinning of the aesthetics of Hanslick and the supporters of 'absolute' music. What Lvovský does is

to confront Hanslick and the conservatives with a demonstration that *Zarathustra* 'works' in 'absolute' musical terms. This is in stark contrast with his view of Dvořák's *Water Goblin*, which Lvovský (in direct opposition to Kalbeck), regarded as aesthetically deficient because its musical structure will not stand on its own but must be propped up by its programme.<sup>52</sup> Lvovský steps far out of conservative territory, however, when he suggests that:

Even he who cannot agree with everything which Strauss wrote down in this work—who without knowledge of the score will find many combinations of sounds unbeautiful at first hearing, must recognize that since Berlioz no composer has entered the scene who has known how to win from the orchestra such quite unprecedented new features.<sup>53</sup>

The admission of the 'unbeautiful' in the name of progress is extremely rare. It is an early instance of breaking with the 'metaphysics of the beautiful in music'<sup>54</sup> which had for so long, it seems, decreed that for music to be good it had first to be beautiful. While Hirschfeld reacted with alarm to *Also sprach Zarathustra*, warning that, 'Art must protect itself',<sup>55</sup> Lvovský was moved to proclaim that 'A new musical era is knocking on the door, so open up!'<sup>56</sup> Lvovský was, however, the spokesman for a progressive minority.

Nevertheless, regardless of whether or not posterity agreed with their opinions, some critics came close to predicting the musical future. In the context of discussions of Dvořák's symphonic poems, we have the following suggestion from Hirschfeld:

For Dvořák has come to a point with his phenomenal orchestral technique where pure forming and colouring, which he commands with ease, no longer gives him pleasure, where in the consciousness of his strength he had to be pushed towards poeticizing and pictorial music. Whoever wants to 'rescue' him and preserve him from the programme-devil ought to give him a good operatic libretto.<sup>57</sup>

Speidel also perceives in Dvořák a superabundance of technical ability, but is more insistent on his detection in *The Noon Witch* of 'an astonishing mimic talent'.<sup>58</sup> So far as Speidel can see:

Antonín Dvořák wants to go on stage. Or, better, he would like to return to the stage, but as a different man from the one who left it. He had composed for the stage in the old manner and with little success. Since then he has appeared to

have acquired everything that a new age has invented for new methods. His symphonic poems are evidence of this. They are dramas without a stage, acts without singers. Just bring on the singers and the opera is complete. When one thinks of this thoroughly musical nature at the service of opera, inwardly attached to form but freed from formalism—what rich and beautiful possibilities of musico-dramatic forms disclose themselves to our gaze! Perhaps musical history still has an important chapter to write: 'Antonín Dvořák and dramatic music'.<sup>59</sup>

Wallaschek, inspired by *Also sprach Zarathustra* to write an article on programme music in general, concluded that:

I for my part would like to see whether perhaps the future will set me right, but for the time being I believe, along with Richard Wagner, that, if a programme really must be bound up with music, there is only one form which will support the total impression and keep the composer from wishing to do more than he can: drama.<sup>60</sup>

What was a little bit true of Dvořák, who had yet to write *Rusalka*, was, of course, many times more true of Strauss.

And so, at least some of the critics were right at least some of the time. Nevertheless, it is still true that the overwhelming majority remained unwilling, or unable, to embrace the most modern music with anything more enthusiastic than resignation, and that many responded with outright hostility. Of course, even Beethoven had attracted critical hostility in his day, a fact which certain of the more 'progressive' critics raised against their conservative colleagues once in a while as an alternative to the usual accusations of deafness or incomprehension. To condemn the conservatives on these grounds, however, is to disregard the complexity of the problems facing composer and audience alike at the turn of the century. Contrary to Graf's claim, the best musical journalism—including that of the conservatives—was not lacking in perspective, depth or presentiment, and only a superficial reading of it could result in the conclusion that it was itself superficial. Beneath the rhetorical flourishes there is considerable serious thought. Thought here is at least part of the problem. Much of the most 'modern' music of the time could be included under the heading 'programme music'—yet much modern thought rejected it.<sup>61</sup> The metaphysics which Graf claimed to be missing from journalism—in his case the metaphysics of Bruckner's mysticism—was likewise hardly in

tune with modern currents of thought. Nevertheless, there is plenty of evidence for a less mystical metaphysics of the type underlying Kalbeck's 'warmed and quickened form'. The critics may have written humorously at times, but they were not frivolous. Far from lacking any feeling for 'the eternal wellspring of art', they were concerned at what they perceived as an arrogance of composers who revelled in their own technical skill without regard for or humility before the classical tradition. And of course they were not all conservative. That they did battle with each other in print is most fortunate for us, since we are left with a rich source of musical opinion, as well as fascinating artefacts of a far more literary and literate culture than our own. That there were so many critics means that there was a great diversity of opinion; the greater the diversity of expressed opinion, the less likely it is for any one critic and his opinion to become dominant. In any case, the critics only really had power over what people read, not what they listened to. Those who fought on the losing side must not be discounted; they may be regarded as devil's advocates who could perhaps have provided a necessary irritant either spurring composers on to defiant creativity or inspiring reference by composers to their artistic consciences. And, if once in a while on their rhetorical rambles they strayed into the domain of Thalia, one should not condemn them on that account, but remember the wisdom of the philosopher:

Das Lachen sprach ich heilig.  
Also sprach Zarathustra.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 132-3.

<sup>2</sup>Leon Botstein, 'Music and its Public: Habits of Listening and the Crisis of Musical Modernism in Vienna, 1870-1914' (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI, 1985).

<sup>3</sup>Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup>Leon Botstein, 'Music and its Public', p. 122.

<sup>5</sup>Max Graf, *Composer and Critic: Two Hundred Years of Musical Criticism* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1947), p. 15.

<sup>7</sup>Articles written by Graf from Paris were published in the Viennese journal *Die Zeit*.

<sup>8</sup>Max Graf, 'Brahms-Studie' in *Wagner Probleme und Andere Studien* (Vienna: Wiener Verlag, [1900]).

<sup>9</sup>Graf, 'Brahms-Studie', pp. 100-1: 'Jenseits des Journalismus beginnt die moderne Cultur. Ich meine hier Journalismus im weitesten Wortsinne: die Form der Lebensführung, des Denkens und Kunstempfindens der bürgerlichen Welt. In der Lebensführung zeigt sich der

Journalismus als gänzlicher Mangel jedes religiösen oder metaphysischen Empfindens, jedes persönlichen Erlebens, jedes Horchens auf innere und äussere Stimmen, jeder Einkehr und jedes Sichbesinnens. Im Denken als oberflächlicher Realismus, der die Dinge so nimmt, wie sie dem flüchtigen Blicke erscheinen, und ihren Wert nach den momentanen Bedürfnissen abschätzt. Im Kunstempfinden: als Mangel jedes Fühlens der ewigen Quellen der Kunst, die ja ein Lebendes, das ton- oder formgewordene Blut des Künstlers ist. Mit einem Worte, Journalismus als Leben, Denken und Empfinden ohne Perspektiven, ohne Tiefen, ohne Ahnungen...

Drei Dinge charakterisieren die moderne Cultur. Sie ist revolutionär; da sie gegen die furchbarsten Machtmittel der kleinsten, borniertesten, verlogenen Köpfe zu kämpfen hat. Sie ist metaphysisch; voll des Bewusstseins der Heiligkeit aller Dinge der Welt und der innersten Ströme des Lebens. Sie ist heroisch, aus einem gesteigerten Wertbewusstsein des inneren Lebens heraus. Alle grossen Führer der neuen Cultur zeigen mehr oder weniger scharf bestimmt jene Züge. ... Alle werden ausgezeichnet durch den Hass und die Feindschaft der journalistischen Welt und ihrer literarischen Wortführer.'

<sup>10</sup>Carl Dahlhaus, for example, went so far as to characterize the latter half of the nineteenth century as having a positivist *Zeitgeist*, which contrasted with the maintenance of romanticism in music (*Between Romanticism and Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 7 ff.).

<sup>11</sup>Graf, *Composer and Critic*, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup>Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time* (London: Dent, 1988), p. 156.

<sup>13</sup>This is evident in two of Graf's publications *Richard Wagner im „Fliegenden Holländer“: ein Beitrag zur Psychologie künstlerischen Schaffens* (Leipzig & Vienna: Franz Deuticke, 1911) and *Die Innere Werkstatt des Musikers* (Stuttgart: Ferdinande Enke, 1910). The latter work forms the basis of his *From Beethoven to Shostakovich: The Psychology of the Composing Process* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), a work of his American exile.

<sup>14</sup>Graf, *Composer and Critic*, p. 271.

<sup>15</sup>Graf, *Composer and Critic*, p. 274.

<sup>16</sup>Graf, *Composer and Critic*, p. 274.

<sup>17</sup>Graf, *Composer and Critic*, p. 275.

<sup>18</sup>Estimates of circulation figures are based on those given in Kurt Paupié, *Handbuch der Österreichischen Pressegeschichte 1848-1959: Band I: Wien* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1960) and H. Sperling, *Adressbuch der Deutschen Zeitschriften und der hervorragenden politischen Tagesblätter: Hand- und Jahrbuch der deutschen Presse*, xviii (1898).

<sup>19</sup>This point is made abundantly clear in Charlotte Pinter, 'Ludwig Speidel als Musikkritiker', (diss., University of Vienna, 1949).

<sup>20</sup>*Neue Musikalische Presse*, 11 April 1897, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>*Deutsche Zeitung*, 9 April 1897, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 11 December 1896, p. 9: 'Wenn man Wagner's „Siegfried“ lange nicht gehört hat, so freut man sich immer wieder auf die nächste längere Pause, in der man ihn nicht hören wird. Der Genuß, welchen uns einige Prachtstellen des großen Schlußduetts gewähren, wird mit der drückenden Langweile des übrigen Werkes viel zu teuer bezahlt. O, wer die dritthalb Acte verschlafen könnte

wie die glückliche Brünnhilde!

<sup>23</sup>For example, *Deutsche Kunst- und Musikzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p. 83, describing a concert of songs by Hugo Wolf: 'Der Componist begleitete alles selbst und konnte mit dem ihm von den Wagnerianern bereiteten Erfolge zufrieden sein.'

<sup>24</sup>*Neue Musikalische Presse*, 15 November 1896, p. 6: 'Das Stück Volkmann's, vielfach fein gemacht und wohlklingend, gehört zu jener Gattung überflüssiger Musik, zu der wir ein rechtes Verhältniss nicht finden können. Es sagt uns nichts, was wir nicht schon wüssten, und Vieles, was wir nicht mehr glauben.'

<sup>25</sup>The Viennese Academy of Fine Art possesses a similarly-named triptych by Hieronymus Bosch as one of its chief treasures; no critic mentions this with reference to Vockner's piece, however, so it is uncertain whether it provided his inspiration. Given Kalbeck's description of the music, this is probably not the case.

<sup>26</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 17 February 1897, p. 1: 'Die ewige Seligkeit Vockner's, ein ebenfalls homophoner Chor mit Flöten- und Harfenbegleitung, hat wenig Verführerisches, und das Wiedersehen der zum neuen Leben Erwachten wird ziemlich reservirt bejubelt, als theile der Componist die geheime Furcht des Skeptikers, im Jenseits denselben berufsmäßigen Vertretern behördlich concessionirter Langweile zu begegnen, die uns den Abschied vom Diesseits so wesentlich erleichtern. Erst in dem thematisch interessanten, fugirten „Chor der Engel“, der auch recht gut klingt, kommt der Musiker zum Vorschein, der ein Stück Himmel in der eigenen Brust trägt, und der Mann dazu, dem man anmerkt, daß er berufen ist, Andere zu belehren, weil er selbst etwas gelernt hat.'

<sup>27</sup>Max Graf, *Legend of a Musical City*, (Philosophical Library, 1945; rpt New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. 186.

<sup>28</sup>*Wiener Tagblatt*, 23 March 1897, p. 2: 'Die Aufnahme der Novität war ein recht eigenthümliche. ... Da wagten es denn Einige mit Applause einzusetzen, darauf: Zischen, dann— wie immer in solchen Fällen—wieder Applaus und wieder Zischen; endlich zischte fast der ganze Saal, um dann — als Richter auf die Philharmoniker wies — ebenso einmüthig zu applaudiren.'

<sup>29</sup>Eduard Hanslick, *Am Ende des Jahrhunderts: [1895–1899.] (Der „Modernen Oper“ VIII. Teil): Musikalische Kritiken und Schilderungen*. 2nd ed. (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für Deutsche Litteratur, 1899); rpt as *The Collected Musical Criticisms of Eduard Hanslick*, vol. 8 (Westmead: Gregg, 1971), p. 271. *Neue Freie Presse*, 23 March 1897, pp. 1–2: 'Tumuluarisch raste der endlose Applaus, schließlich von beherzten Zischlauten gemildert. Übrigens schien mir der Beifall mehr noch dem Orchester zu gelten als dem Komponisten; denn ich kann mir kaum denken, daß unser Publikum wirklich Genuß und Begeisterung aus diesem wüsten Hexenkessel geschöpft habe.'

<sup>30</sup>*Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p. 4: 'Nicht einmal, die paar Dummköpfe, die es für gut fanden, in den Beifallssturm, den diese Schöpfung entfesselte, so recht bubenhaft hinein zu zischen—nicht einmal diese geistig verkrüppelten Pflänzchen aus der konservativen Baumschule, konnte mir diesen Eindruck verkümmern. ... „Also sprach Zarathustra“ hat einer grossartigen Erfolg; das vereinzelte Zischen der schon erwähnten Gassenjungen wurde

durch stets erneute Beifallsstürme zum Schweigen gebracht.'

<sup>31</sup>*Ostdeutsche Rundschau*, 24 March 1897, : 'Es gibt nicht wenige musikalische Philister, auf welche schon der Name „Programm Musik“ wirkt wie ein rothes Tuch auf den Stier. Wenn nun gar die Idee einer Programm Musik mit der rücksichtslosen Kühnheit durchgeführt wird, wie in Richard Strauß's „Also sprach Zarathustra“, dann kennt die Entrüstung jener engherzigen Parteigänger des Ewig-Gestrigen keine Grenzen. Wer weiß, ob der geniale Münchener Tondichter nicht gelyncht worden wäre, hätte er im letzten philharmonischen Concert persönlich dirigirt?'

<sup>32</sup>*Deutsche Zeitung*, 27 March 1897, p. 1: 'Das Werk, dessen unglaubliche Schwierigkeiten von den Philharmonikern in wahrhaft bewunderungswürdiger Weise überwunden wurden, hätte, dem Durchschnittseindruck entsprechend, einen mittelstarken Erfolg gehabt, wenn nicht Einige von den ganz Gebildeten, wahrscheinlich aus Aerger darüber, daß sie aus ihrem Verdauungsschlummer gestört wurden, ihre Entrüstung durch Zischen äußern zu müssen geglaubt hätten. Die Folge war das plötzliche Losbrechen eines Beifallssturmes.'

<sup>33</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 24 March 1897, p. 1: 'Struthiocamelus, der Uebermusiker, mußte kommen, um das heilige Werk Zarathustra's zu vollenden. ...

Der Uebermusiker braucht keine Bildung und achtet kein Gesetz. Er bricht in die fremdesten Harmonien ein, schändet den Wohllaut und mordet die Melodie; denn er ist der Herr seiner Kunst und kann mit ihr machen was ihm beliebt.'

<sup>34</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 24 March 1897, p. 2: 'Mancher verlor das Gehör, mancher den Verstand, und Alles die Geduld. Denn die Welterlösung des Uebermusikers war eine sehr gründliche, ausführliche, eingehende und tiefe. („Lust will ja doch Ewigkeit!“) Als die Contrabassisten ihr großes C, das mit dem H des übrigen Orchesters sich noch immer nicht versöhnen und zu der vollkommenen Harmonie des Einklanges verschmelzen wollte, endlich ausgebrummt hatten, sahen sich die Herren und Damen verduzt an. Was Zarathustra sprach und was Struthiocamelus in Tönen dichtete, hatte Niemand vernommen. Zarathustra's und Struthiocamelus' Mund war nicht für diese Ohren. Einige „höhere Menschen“ aber hatten wenigstens das Lachen vom Orchester gelernt, so daß der Uebermusiker einen seiner mystischen Zwecke glücklich erreichte.

„Das Lachen sprach ich heilig.“

Also sprach Zarathustra.'

<sup>35</sup>*Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p. 5: (with original emphasis) „Da trat ein taubes, putziges Kerlchen hervor, hielt sich die Ohren zu, damit man glaube, sein Gehör sei beleidigt worden, und sprach: Ich rede zu der Mehrheit, denn ich setze voraus, dass die Mehrheit ebensowenig was versteht, wie ich. Schutz und Sicherheit ist nur bei der Seichtigkeit, denn wo es recht flach ist, da fühlen alle Flachköpfe wohl. Was ich nicht verstehe und die Masse nicht versteht, das ist nichts! Zu was sich mühen! Wahrlich, ich sage euch, die Einfältigen im Geiste sind die Mehrheit, und ich, ich bin der Kritiker für die Mehrheit. Ich stehe hoch über den Kritikern, welche im Eigendünkel des Verständnisses hochmüthig auf die Masse herabsehen.— Ich lehre euch den Ueberkritiker. Die Musik ist etwas was überwunden werden

soll! und ich, der Ueberkritiker, bin am Werke, denn ich besitze das Haupterforderniss dazu, ich habe Ohren, die nicht hören.

„Sie haben etwas, worauf sie stolz sind. Bildung nennen sie's, es zeichnet sie aus vor den Ziegenhirten. Ich aber, der Ueberkritiker, habe dieses Etwas von mir geworfen, und ich kann roh und gemein werden wie ein Ziegenhirte!“

Das Lachen sprach ich heilig,  
Also sprach Zarathustra.'

<sup>36</sup>*Deutsches Volksblatt*, 30 March 1897, pp.1–3.

<sup>37</sup>*Ostdeutsche Rundschau*, 24 March 1897, p. 7: '... das, was nur Mittel sein sollte, wird Selbstzweck!'

<sup>38</sup>*Ostdeutsche Rundschau*, 24 March 1897, p. 7: '... ebenso ist die Tanzszene eigentlich doch nichts Anderes als die in's Kannibalische übersetzte Venusbergmusik.'

<sup>39</sup>*Deutsche Kunst- und Musikzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p. 85: 'Nicht nur einen Respect vor der äußeren Mache und Technik der Arbeit, vor den öfters achtfach getheilten Geigen, den sechsfach getheilten Bratschen und Celli, den vierfach getheilten Contrabässen u. s. w., dem kolossalen Orchesterapparat, der noch durch die Orgel, ein Glockenspiel und eine Glocke vermehrt wurde, vor dem souveränen und zielbewußten Beherrschen aller harmonischen und contrapunktischen Mittel, sondern auch vor dem starken musikalisch-idealen Willen, der sich in diesem starken materiellen Können ausdrückte.'

<sup>40</sup>*Am Ende*, p. 228 (from *Neue Freie Presse*, 14 November 1897, pp.1–2): 'Gesund, klar und einpräglich, ohne banal zu werden, geistreich ohne eitle Bizarrerie, gehört dieses Werk zu den besten dieses Autors.'

<sup>41</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 19 January 1897, p.1: 'Schade um so manches jüngere Talent, das, um vor der sensationslüsternden großen Menge ein Ansehen zu gewinnen, sich in abenteuerlichen Abgeschmackheiten verliert!'

<sup>42</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 27 December 1896, p.17: 'Dvořák ist zu einem Grade der Technik gelangt, dass er jeder Aesthetik zu Trotz ausruft: »Ich kann Alles, was ich will.« Freilich antwortet die Aesthetik: »Ich will aber nicht Alles, was er kann«, und hofft, dass diese Art Musikmalerei nur eine interessante Episode, eine Kraftprobe der orchestralen Ausdrucksfähigkeit in dem Schaffen Dvořák's bleiben werde.'

<sup>43</sup>*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 1 December 1896, p.1: 'Vor der Instrumentalen Leuchtkraft des „Wassermann's" müssen die mühsam zusammengespinnelten oder auch dreist hingeschmierten Tongemälde vielbewunderter moderner Coloristen verblassen; denn hier bricht der feurige Glanz aus dem Innern hervor, und die Farbe ist, was sie immer sein soll, erwärmte und beseelte Form.'

<sup>44</sup>*Am Ende*, p. 269 (from *Neue Freie Presse*, 23 March 1897, pp.1–2): 'Die Komposition, ungemein schwach und gequält als musikalische Erfindung, ist eigentlich nur ein raffiniertes Orchesterkunststück, ein klingender Farbenrausch. Als geistreiche Kombination neuer, origineller, aber auch abenteuerlicher und beleidigender Klangeffekte ist das Stück gewiß interessant und unterhaltend. Aber diese fabelhafte Orchestertechnik war nach meiner Empfindung dem Komponisten weniger ein Mittel als vielmehr Zweck und Hauptsache.'

<sup>45</sup>*Neue Musikalische Presse*, 28 March 1897, p. 3: 'Alles kopfüber, kopfunter, fussdrüber, fussdrunter; schliesslich waren H-dur und C aufeinandergeprallt, dass man C für H und H für C nehmen könnte, was man in Strauss-Kreisen das »Welträthsel« nennt. Aus solchen Explosionen sollen wir den »Uebermenschen« Nietzsche's herauslesen! Gewiss leuchteten bei dieser musikalischen Sprengarbeit auch geniale Funken auf, welche über den Wahnwitz des symphonischen Hinterweltlers hinausblitzten. Aber diese Genialität weckt Grauen; denn wir sind am Ende der Musik, bei einer Musik, welche endlich nur noch für die Schlange und den Adler Zarathustra's geschaffen scheint. Für diesen »Tanz« sind wir noch nicht reif, und kommen wir zu Reife — was nützt es uns? Dann setzt sich wieder ein anderer Uebermensch auf diesen Uebermenschen und theilt die Geigen zweiunddreissigfach, bläst aus sechzehn Hörnern und lässt die Tuben trillern. ... Strauss sagt stolz: »Das ist mein Contrapunkt!« Und niemand kann ihm diesen Contrapunkt wegdisputiren. In einiger Zeit kommen die Anderen und rufen: [»]Das ist auch unser Contrapunkt!« und ehe man sich's versieht, wird das der allgemeine Contrapunkt. Die »Zurückgebliebenen«, welche den Capellmeistern Neu-Deutschlands nicht nachfliegen können, werden vergebens zeteren. Mahnungen helfen nichts und sind lächerlich. Die Kunst muss sich selbst schützen. Will oder vermag sie das nicht, dann wird eben die Bahn für die Strausse frei. All Heil!'

<sup>46</sup>*Das Vaterland*, 28 March 1897, Beiblatt, p.1: 'Der größte Humor an der Sache ist, daß nun ein Vertreter überwagner'scher Musik, die Philosophie dieses Gegners aller tieferen Tonkunst, dieses bescheidenen Bewunderers des seichtesten Ohrenschaumes mit allem Aufwand jeglicher Kunstmittel und -Mittelchen vertont.'

<sup>47</sup>*Das Vaterland*, 28 March 1897 (Beiblatt), p.1: 'Die Aufführung der Tondichtung „Also sprach Zarathustra" von Richard Strauss hat die Augen öffnen müssen über die charakteristische Einseitigkeit unserer Zeit: eine nie dagewesene Ausbildung aller technischen, äußerlichen, formellen, virtuoson Mittel, eine feminine Hingabe an alle nervösen Sensation, dabei aber ein absoluter Mangel eines besonnenen Maßes, eines tiefbewußten Zieles, einer Herrschaft über sich selbst und über die entfesselten Kunstmittel, über Gefühle und Triebe, der Mangel einer männlichen Willenskraft, eines künstlerischen Ethos. Mit einem Worte: wir haben trefflich geschulte, virtuose und höchst empfängliche Künstler, wir bekommen aber kein Kunstwerk zu sehen und zu hören. Alles ist reichlich und überflüssig da, nur das Wesentliche, der Kern fehlt, die Einsicht, das Gefühl und der Ernst, die auf die Sache selbst gerichtet sind. Wir athmen Atelierluft, aber nicht den Hauch der Wahrheit. Es ist Koketterie, Liebelei mit der Kunst, aber nicht Liebe.'

<sup>48</sup>*Das Vaterland*, 28 March 1897, Beiblatt, p. 1: 'sie ist nicht langweilig, sie ist sogar unterhaltend.'

<sup>49</sup>*Neue Musikalische Presse*, 28 February 1897, p. 4. The translation is taken from *Faust*, Part II, Act 1 in the edition translated with an introduction by Philip Wayne (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959), p. 66.

<sup>50</sup>*Das Vaterland*, 1 January 1897, p.1: '[Dieser und seine Schule, wie überhaupt die ganze neuere vorwärtsstrebende in der Nachromantik befangen ist, sucht auf den stolzen Wegen von Berlioz und Liszt noch immer höher und weiter

zu klimmen. Sie bildet sich ein, daß man den Genius durch seine eigene Mittel übertrumpfen könne. Sie wähnt vielleicht, daß ihr dies bereits gelungen sei. Das ist einfach ein theoretischer und kunstgeschichtlicher Irrthum.] Diese Modernen sehen nicht, daß auch sie, ebenso wie die Classicisten und Romantiker einem Epigonenthum des Genies verfallen, das wie jedes Epigonenthum unwahr, gespreizt, aufgestellt, vergänglich ist. Sie glauben noch Zukunftsmusik zu machen, und machen doch nur die Vergangenheitsmusik der Vierziger- und Fünfziger-Jahre. Was damals wahr und lebendig war, ist es jetzt nicht mehr. Wenn wirkliche Genies wie Liszt, Wagner und Berlioz heute wieder neugeboren würden, sie würden gewiß Alles eher thun, als sich selber nachzuahmen. Sie würden im Gegentheile für die neue Zeit neue Ausdrucksmittel, neue Ideale suchen und finden. Und sie würden wahrscheinlich ein ebensolches Martyrium wie zuerst durchzumachen haben, bis sie ihre getreuen und gesinnungstüchtigen Lisztianer und Wagnerianer überzeugt hätten, daß es an der Zeit sei, nunmehr das Saitenspiel neu und anders zu stimmen. ... Es ist aber, wie in aller Kunst, nothwendig, daß nicht ein Macher, sondern ein Genius an die Spitze einer neuen Bewegung trete.'

<sup>51</sup> *Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p.4: 'Was den musikalischen Aufbau dieser Tondichtung anbelangt, so wird auch der verbissenste Gegner Verworrenheit und Formlosigkeit derselben nicht zum Vorwurfe machen können. Mit Klarheit und zwingender Logik vollzieht sich die thematische Arbeit und es ist erstaunlich, wie es Strauss verstanden hat, all' diese enormen contrapunktischen und thematischen Combinationen in den Dienst seiner Ideen zu stellen.'

<sup>52</sup> *Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1 December 1896, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p. 4: 'Auch der, welcher nicht mit Allem einverstanden sein kann, was R. Strauss in diesem Werke niederschrieb—welcher ohne Kenntniss der Partitur manche Klangcombinationen beim ersten Anhören für unschön finden wird, muss anerkennen, dass seit Berlioz kein Componist den Plan betreten hat, welcher dem Orchester so ganz unerhörte neue Seiten abzugewinnen wusste.'

<sup>54</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Aesthetics of Music*, trans. William Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Neue Musikalische Presse*, 28 March 1897, p. 5: 'Die Kunst muss sich selbst schützen.'

<sup>56</sup> *Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1 April 1897, p. 5: 'Eine neue musikalische Aera pochte an die Pforten, so sei ihr dann aufgethan!'

<sup>57</sup> *Wiener Abendblatt*, 31 December 1896, p. 2: 'Denn Dvořák ist mit seiner phänomenalen Orchestertechnik auf einen Punkt gelangt, wo ihm das reine Formen und Färben, das er spielend beherrscht, nicht mehr Freude macht, wo er in seinem Kraftbewußtsein zur poetisirenden und malenden Musik gedrängt werden mußte. Will man ihn durchaus „retten“ vor dem Programmteufel bewahren, so gebe man ihm einen guten Operntext.'

<sup>58</sup> *Fremden-Blatt*, 28 January 1897, p. 6: 'Anton Dvořák ... zeigt in seiner „Hexe“ ein erstaunliches mimisches Talent.'

<sup>59</sup> *Fremden-Blatt*, 28 January 1897, p. 6: 'Anton Dvořák will auf die Bühne. Oder vielmehr, er will auf die Bühne zurück, aber als ein Anderer, als der er von ihr geschieden. Er hat damals in der alten Weise geschaffen und mit wenig Erfolg. Seitdem scheint er sich Alles angeeignet zu haben, was eine neue Zeit an neueren Mitteln erfunden. Zeugniß dafür sind seine symphonischen Dichtungen. Sie sind Dramen ohne Bühne, Mimus ohne den Sänger. Man gebe den Sänger hinzu, und die Oper ist fertig. Nun denke man sich diese durchaus musikalische Natur im Dienste der Oper, innerlich an die Form gebunden, aber befreit vom Formalismus—und welche reichen und schönen Möglichkeiten musikalisch-dramatischer Gestaltung eröffnen sich vor unserem Blicke! Vielleicht hat die Musikgeschichte noch ein wichtiges Kapitel zu schreiben: Anton Dvořák und die dramatische Musik.'

<sup>60</sup> *Die Zeit*, 27 March 1897, p. 203: 'Ich für meinen Theil will sehen, ob mich vielleicht die Zukunft eines besseren belehrt, vorläufig aber glaube ich, mit Richard Wagner, dass, wenn schon ein Programm mit der Musik verbunden werden muss, es nur eine Form gibt, die den Totalindruck unterstützt und den Componisten selbst davor bewahrt, mehr zu wollen als er kann: das Drama.'

<sup>61</sup> Another critic who rejected programme music was the young Heinrich Schenker, who had contributed an essay ('Unpersönliche Musik') on this problem to the *Neue Revue* (9 April 1897). It is published in translation by Horst B. Loeschmann in Heinrich Schenker, 'Three Essays from *Neue Revue*', *Music Analysis* 7.2 (1988), p.134–8.