

## **The Rediscovery of Kaminski, Schwarz-Schilling and Schubert with the Orchestre des Régions Européennes under the direction of Konrad von Abel**

With the upcoming one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of composer Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling on May 9, 2004, the conductor Konrad von Abel has decided to take his renowned string orchestra, which is based in Besançon/France, on a large-scale concert tour throughout Germany. During this tour, the orchestra will present pieces by Heinrich Kaminski, Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling, and Heinz Schubert to German audiences in numerous cities. Konrad von Abel has been promoting the music of Kaminski's circle as no one else before him.

Who today has ever heard of Heinrich Kaminski, Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling, or even Heinz Schubert? Music History has almost forgotten them and among general audiences the names of these composers are unknown. However, this has not always been the case, and one can find historic reasons for this that are not based on the actual quality of the music. Heinrich Kaminski, his pupil Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling, and Heinz Schubert, who was spiritually and artistically closely related to Kaminski, did not represent a school, but rather a specific ethos of creativity. Their mental and spiritual attitudes were not characterized by a one-sided desire to simply further develop music, or an affinity to any type of artistic fashion or trend. Their thinking and conscious modes of musical experience were instead geared towards a timeless dimension in composition and a natural advancement of the polyphonic achievements of Johann Sebastian Bach and Anton Bruckner.

### **The historic and aesthetic contexts**

During the 1930s and 40s, Heinrich Kaminski (1886-1946) was generally viewed as one of the truly great composers of the day. By using the great German tradition of contrapuntal thinking as his fundamental point of reference, he was able to develop his orchestral, choral, and chamber compositions to new and previously unrealized levels. Many saw him as the legitimate successor of the tradition built on the art of J. S. Bach and the late works of Beethoven and Bruckner. His musical language was based on a conceptualization of sound that was almost hymn-like and religiously motivated, which he developed into a form of universal strength and power. Because of this inner force, honesty, and uncompromising passion, Kaminski's music was able to successfully resist the general cultural dictatorship of the Nazis.

Kaminski's most well known student was Carl Orff. However, Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling (1904-85), who came from Walter Braunfels to Kaminski in the late 1920s, was much closer to him. It was also Schwarz-Schilling who continued against the predominant 'Zeitgeist', by further using the techniques he had learned and absorbed from Kaminski, after his master's death.

Heinz Schubert (1908-45) was a religiously motivated composer and conductor who resisted without compromise the political impositions of his time. In a way, he paid with his life for his artistic convictions. The only historic recording that experts are aware of is one made during the war of his large-scale 'Hymnisches Konzert' with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwängler.

After Hitler's gain of power, Kaminski developed an attitude of "inner immigration", comparable in some degree to that of Shostakovich. Kaminski remained in his country, yet cultivated an inner and mental opposition to the newly developing powers. On July 4, 1933, his 47<sup>th</sup> birthday, Kaminski and his friends together founded the "order of those that love". The rules of this order demanded that its members "hate no one and nothing, and must not be seduced into hate by evil willfulness or abusive actions. Hate is to be overcome by No-Hate". As well, the order requested "one should send loving thoughts into the world daily, even if it is for a few seconds or minutes only". It was not possible to earn an infinite membership into the order. One had to renew one's membership by continuous and daily renewal of devotion to service. The "rules" of this order were only to be passed on to those who were ready and mature enough to respect them. "Complete silence about these matters was seen as a self-understood law".

After many years of challenges and struggles, Kaminski was declared as a "half Jew" in 1938, which therefore banned his compositions from any public performance. The composer and conductor Heinz Schubert,

who deeply respected and adored Kaminski, violated this policy of the Nazi regime by premiering Kaminski's "In memoriam Gabriellae". Due to this incident, Schubert himself had to face suppression. On May 31, 1941, Kaminski was informed by the "Reichskammer" that the governmental prohibition banning his pieces from public performance had been withdrawn and changed. It was declared that Kaminski's reputation was restored "based on the analysis that as a half-caste he was related to only one fully Jewish grandparent. Therefore, the leadership of the NSDAP [Nazi party] does not have any more concerns about public performances of his works, except performances for the NSDAP itself and all related sub branches of the party".

The free-spirited and humanistic Kaminski remained a blacklisted victim of the circumstances of his time, especially due to the fact that all the conductors who had promoted and supported him (Bruno Walter, Fritz Busch, and Hermann Scherchen) had either emigrated or faced suppression themselves. With the end of the Second World War, Kaminski's work could have experienced a renaissance, but he died the following year. His student Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling, and Schilling's wife Dusza von Hakrid, a Polish pianist also banned from performance, both had to fear suppression by the secret police known as the "Gestapo". For these artists, the end of the war represented their liberation. Heinz Schubert, on the other hand, disappeared during the last days of the war. It is assumed that he was either killed on the streets, or murdered in one of the concentration camps at some point during this time.

### **It is time.**

The post-war climate continued to develop and grow against those composers who stood strong and refused to abandon the natural powers of tonality and harmony. In central Europe the so-called "avant-garde" began to dominate the musical landscape and claimed the overall leadership in new musical developments. First, there appeared a fixation on atonal techniques emphasizing structural methods. Then, composers focused more and more on the short-lived and purely stimulating effects of sound. Everything that resisted this totalitarian attitude was more or less categorized as "anachronistic" or "late-romantic", and was generally ignored in a rather undifferentiated manner. Even the leading composers of Russia and Northern Europe, such as Shostakovich, Sibelius, and Britten, were already considered antiquated.

Today, these rigid aesthetic attitudes have been revealed to be absurd. They eventually contributed to the "postmodern" lack of orientation and arbitrary choice of direction. People have started to rediscover that which was ignored not only during the Nazi era, but also under the inflexible and rigid "Zeitgeist" of modernism. The accused and prosecuted composers in exile, as well as those who had to suffer under the Nazi regime, are now being internationally rehabilitated. Even though most of them have already died, light is now being shed upon their well-deserved artistic contribution and value. With the exception of the discussion around the symbolic figure of Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Soviet Union, the public has yet to acknowledge what took place during the so-called "inner-emigration". The revival and publication of works by Heinrich Kaminski, Heinz Schubert, and Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling is not only a hugely important contribution to understanding and perception of the true diversity of 20<sup>th</sup> century German music.

Previous attempts to rescue this exquisite music have been defeated. However, this transcending art that emerged out of the musical tradition naturally shall now finally be publicly presented to a wider audience, and find its first forum to enable reflection and discussion. The mental resistance against a totalitarian regime that developed into what is called "inner emigration" was forced to remain as such after the war. It is more than time to overcome this status of emigration if we truly desire to know what the 20<sup>th</sup> century has produced and what the 20<sup>th</sup> century has to say for the future. The year of the hundredth birthday of Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling is a welcomed occasion for this overdue discovery and utilization of its inspirational impulses. This forum serves as a force against the materialistically through-organized world and focuses directly on the transcendence of the sounding material. Kaminski and his circle did not view music as an elite art form, but as nutrition that is essential for the survival of the human soul.

### **The works**

Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling's 'Introduktion und Fuge für Streichorchester' is based on his string quartet in f minor (1932), in which he used his own unique hymn-like compositional tone, yet still remained close to his teacher Kaminski. The orchestration for string orchestra was completed in 1948 and was premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Sergiu Celibidache on April 10, 1949. It is a unique expression of fate that now, after more than half a century, Konrad von Abel, an expert on Kaminski and the closest colleague of Sergiu Celibidache, dedicates himself to these composers and their works.

Heinz Schubert composed "Vom Unendlichen", a Prelude and Fugue for Soprano and three solo string quintets, at the beginning of the 1940s. The work is based on a pantheistic hymnus to the creator. The movement is rich in figurations, and Schubert further develops the essence of solemn praise in an unlimited manner using the highest forms of German contrapuntal tradition.

Heinrich Kaminski composed his string quartet in f sharp minor in 1916. The piece, dedicated to Bruno Walter, expresses his shock resulting from the war-related death of his artistic friend Franz Marc. Kaminski achieved his own break-through as a composer with its premiere on March 12, 1917 in Munich. The critical reviews stated, "The vision of a new land emerges with the revelation of this young genius". The finale movement of the work, which in its entirety lasts over one hour, consists of a monumental fugue that can be excerpted and performed on its own. In 1927, Kaminski revised the quintet, which at the time was performed by leading musicians all over Europe. After the revisions, Kaminski asked his student Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling to transcribe the work for string orchestra, almost as a final exam before "graduating". Kaminski supervised and authorized his student's work the entire time. Franz von Hoesslin premiered the new transcription for string orchestra on February 22, 1929 in Wuppertal. Overall, the work is comparable to Beethoven's "Grosse Fuge", Bruckner's String Quintet, or even Schoenberg's "Transfigured Night". The string orchestra transcription of the original chamber music piece demands the highest degree of differentiation and underlines the symphonic dimensions of the composition with its expansion of dynamic and color contrasts. It is now finally possible for Kaminski's work to be rediscovered and understood as one of the most monumental and greatest pieces for string orchestra of its time.

#### **Cities and locations of the concert tour**

The tour of the Orchestre des Régions Européennes under the direction of Konrad von Abel is meant to include those cities that are geographically and biographically connected to Heinrich Kaminski, Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling and Heinz Schubert. Those cities, among others, are:

**Tiengen** in the southern parts of the Black Forrest (birthplace of Kaminski).

**Munich** (the young Kaminski lived here and heard the premiere of his string quintet – Heinz Schubert worked here as music director of an opera house).

**Benediktbeuern** in Bavaria (Residence and place of death of Kaminski).

**Berlin** (Kaminski and Schwarz-Schilling worked here primarily as teachers).

**Bielefeld** (Kaminski served here as music director/conductor).

**Hannover** (birth place of Schwarz-Schillings).

**Dessau** (birth place of Schubert).

**Innsbruck** (Schwarz-Schilling worked here as teacher).

**Büdingen** (Christian Schwarz-Schilling former minister of Germany and son of the composer lives here).

**Hamburg**

Foto - Top Page 1: Heinrich Kaminski

Foto – Center Page 1: Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling, 1946

Photo – Bottom page 1: Heinz Schubert

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