

Musical Theater:
Librettistics, Scenography, and Directing

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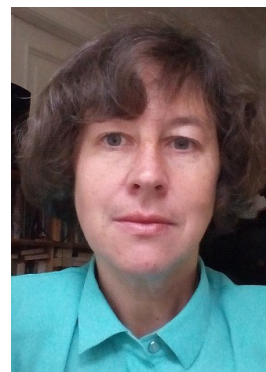
**Interpretive Restoration:
Othmar Schoeck's *Das Schloß Dürande*
in a New Edition**

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Abstract. The article highlights a high-profile project by the Bern Academy of Arts to bring back into musical life one of the key works in the history of 20th-century Swiss music — Othmar Schoeck's opera *Das Schloß Dürande* (1941). For many decades, despite its manifest musical merits, the performance of this composition seemed absolutely impossible due to the political overtones with which it is associated. Various “interpretive restoration” strategies were aimed at creating a new version of the opera. In the first place, the libretto, which was created by the Nazi writer Hermann Burte and based on the novella of the same name by the 19th-century German romantic author Joseph Eichendorff, underwent significant revision. The rather low literary level of the original libretto, which employed a large number of ideological clichés and slogans, required the replacement of more than half of the text, essentially involving its rewriting based on the appropriate verse texts written by Eichendorff.

Translated by Thomas A. Beavitt

The changes also affected the vocal part. In addition, a careful study of historical documents made it possible to clarify the circumstances of the opera's premiere, which took place in Nazi Berlin in 1943. After a mere four performances, the opera was removed at the request of the Third Reich ideologist, Hermann Göring. New biographical information has also more fully revealed the position of Schoeck, who was not a supporter of National Socialism. Considering that "being Swiss" meant adopting a scrupulous attitude of "neutrality", the composer collaborated with the Nazis for career reasons. The result of many years of work on the project was the performance of the updated opera *Daß Schloß Dürande* at the Meiningen Theatre in 2019. It didn't convince everyone. However, the determining factor in assessing the opera was not so much the quality of the music and libretto, but rather the problematic history of its creation and reception in an ideological context. Thus, even in its new "denazified" version, *Das Schloß Dürande* remains closely connected with the past.

Keywords: Othmar Schoeck, Joseph von Eichendorff, Switzerland, 20th century music, National Socialism, interpretive restoration, history of perception

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*Музыкальный театр:
либреттистика, сценография и режиссура*

Научная статья

**«Интерпретирующая реставрация»:
«Замок Дюранде» Отмара Шёка
в новой редакции**

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Аннотация. В статье освещается резонансный проект Высшей школы искусств Берна, цель которого — вернуть в музыкальную жизнь одно из ключевых сочинений в истории швейцарской музыки XX века, оперу Отмара Шёка «Замок Дюранде» (1941). Исполнение сочинения на протяжении многих десятилетий представлялось абсолютно невозможным, несмотря на его очевидные музыкальные достоинства. Стратегии «интерпретирующей реставрации» были направлены на создание новой версии оперы. В первую очередь существенной переработке подверглось либретто, созданное нацистским писателем Германом Бурте на основе одноименной новеллы немецкого романтика XIX века Йозефа Эйхендорфа. Крайне низкий литературный уровень текста, обилие идеологических штампов и лозунгов потребовали замены большей половины либретто, которое, по сути, было сочинено заново и превращено в прозу с использованием подходящих стихотворных текстов Эйхендорфа. Изменения коснулись и вокальной партии. Кроме того, тщательное изучение исторических документов позволило прояснить обстоятельства премьеры оперы, состоявшейся в нацистском Берлине в 1943 году. После четырех спектаклей опера была снята по требованию идеолога Третьего рейха Г. Геринга. Новые биографические сведения более полно раскрыли и позицию Шёка,

который не был сторонником национал-социализма. Твердо убежденный в том, что «как швейцарец» он всегда «нейтрален», композитор сотрудничал с нацистами, руководствуясь карьерными соображениями. Результатом многолетней работы над проектом стало исполнение обновленной оперы «Замок Дюранде» в театре Майнингена в 2019 году. Оно убедило не всех. Определяющим в оценке оперы было не качество музыки и либретто, но проблематичная история создания и восприятия в идеологизированном контексте. И в новой, «денацифицированной» версии «Замок Дюранде» остался тесно связанным с прошлым.

Ключевые слова: Отмар Шёк, Йозеф фон Эйхендорф, Швейцария, музыка XX века, национал-социализм, интерпретирующая реставрация, история восприятия

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Introduction

The name of Othmar Schoeck (1886–1957), a Swiss composer of the first half of the 20th century, is relatively unknown (*Illustration 1*). Schoeck was certainly overshadowed by his famous compatriots Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin, who at different times left Switzerland to achieve international fame. However, around ten years ago, Schoeck’s work attracted the attention of the musical community. At the centre of a high-profile project by the Bern Academy of Arts is Schoeck’s forgotten opera *Das Schloß Dürande*, one of the key works in the history of 20th-century Swiss music — and, according to some critics, the composer’s masterpiece [1, p. 9]. For many decades, despite its obvious musical merits, the performance of this work seemed absolutely impossible due to the political overtones with which it continues to be associated. Thus, the opera has been stigmatised due to the circumstances of its commissioning and performance in Nazi Germany. In 2014, a research group was formed in Bern, which included representatives of various specialties — musicologists, writers, and performing musicians. Its remit was to develop strategies for so-called “interpretive restoration” to permit the composition to be brought back into musical life and included in the repertoire of opera houses. The restoration work, which took place over several years, was reported in detail in the press and thoroughly documented in scholarly reports.¹

The Swiss project of “interpretive restoration” raises a whole slew of issues that go beyond the scope of Schoeck’s opera and are relevant for the entire musical and theatrical community. Paradoxically, it combines two almost opposite tendencies: on the one hand, the rehabilitation of repressed art; on the other, an attempt to reconsider the attitude towards art that tarnishes its reputation by serving ideology. It also raises the question of the artistic role played by the quality and content of the opera libretto, along with the possibility of completely replacing it while preserving the music. Finally, it also problematises the question of reception: can a work be “cleansed” of the history of its original creation and reception in an ideological context?



Illustration 1.
Othmar Schoeck.
Photographer Gotthard Schuch
[2, p. 19]

¹ See more on the Bern Academy of Arts page dedicated to the project: „Das Schloss Dürande“ von Othmar Schoeck. (n.d.). *Institut Interpretation*. Hochschule der Künste Bern. Retrieved December 9, 2024, from <https://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/projekte/das-schloss-duerande-von-othmar-schoeck>

*Betrayal of Modernism and Ostensible Neutrality:
The Premiere of Das Schloß Dürande in Berlin*

Schoeck's reputation in musicology as a fanatical anti-modernist has a sound basis.² The so-called "Helvetic stylistic lag" [4, p. 4] has been applied to characterise the special status of Swiss music, which for a long time remained an island of patriarchal tranquillity amid the turbulent current of new musical trends during the early twentieth century. The Romantic tradition was continued in Schoeck's work, in which the main place was occupied by music with words — opera and various chamber-vocal compositions. It was only in the early 1920s, having visited Paris, which was at that time engulfed in an anti-Romantic backlash, and after attending several festivals of contemporary music in Austria and Germany, that Schoeck became acquainted with the current state of his peers' oeuvres. Following this period, he enthusiastically listened to and studied the music of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Hindemith and Krenek.³ Over the course of several months in 1923, he went from being an avowed tonal composer to immerse himself in atonality, perhaps not without being stung by Paul Bekker's ironic remark about the alleged backwardness of Swiss music: "Well, 50 years will pass and Switzerland will have its say" [3, p. 45]. However, Schoeck's "modern" works of the second half of the 1920s did not find popular or critical support, leading to his subsequent break with modernism. It seems that resentment towards his progressive contemporaries may have made the composer an easy prey for the Nazi ideologists. It was at this time due to just such a cultural backlash that new perspectives were opening up for Schoeck's music in Germany.

"As a Swiss, I am neutral" — this phrase of Schoeck's became famous when in 1937, having received the German Erwin von Steinbach Prize, he was forced to answer to criticism in Switzerland (see [1, p. 8]). These words were intended to demonstrate his supposedly apolitical position. His avowed belief that Swiss citizenship represented a guarantee of neutrality, whether sincere or not, in any case provided him with an alibi. While he was not a National Socialist, he displayed loyalty towards them and sought to extract maximum benefit from his cooperation with them.⁴ Like any composer, he wanted his art to have

² For example, in his 1950 diary entry, Schoeck calls Stravinsky "the chief charlatan of modern music" and his work "vile sabotage" [3, p. 44].

³ In 1923, Schoeck came to Paris at the invitation of Honegger, where he met the composers known as "Les Six" and attended the premiere of *Les Noces*; in August of the same year he participated in the chamber music festival of the *International Society for Contemporary Music* (ISCM) in Salzburg, where he met Alban Berg, Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, Maurice Ravel, Alois Hába, Paul Hindemith and Ernst Krenek; in June 1924, he attended the festival of the All-German Music Union, where Three Fragments from Berg's opera *Wozzeck* were performed [3, pp. 44–45].

⁴ As B. Felmlí notes, Schoeck was hardly an anti-Semite who welcomed the removal of Jewish musicians from their positions; rather, he hoped that "the place which had been so long unjustly denied him would now be freed for himself" [5, p. 132].

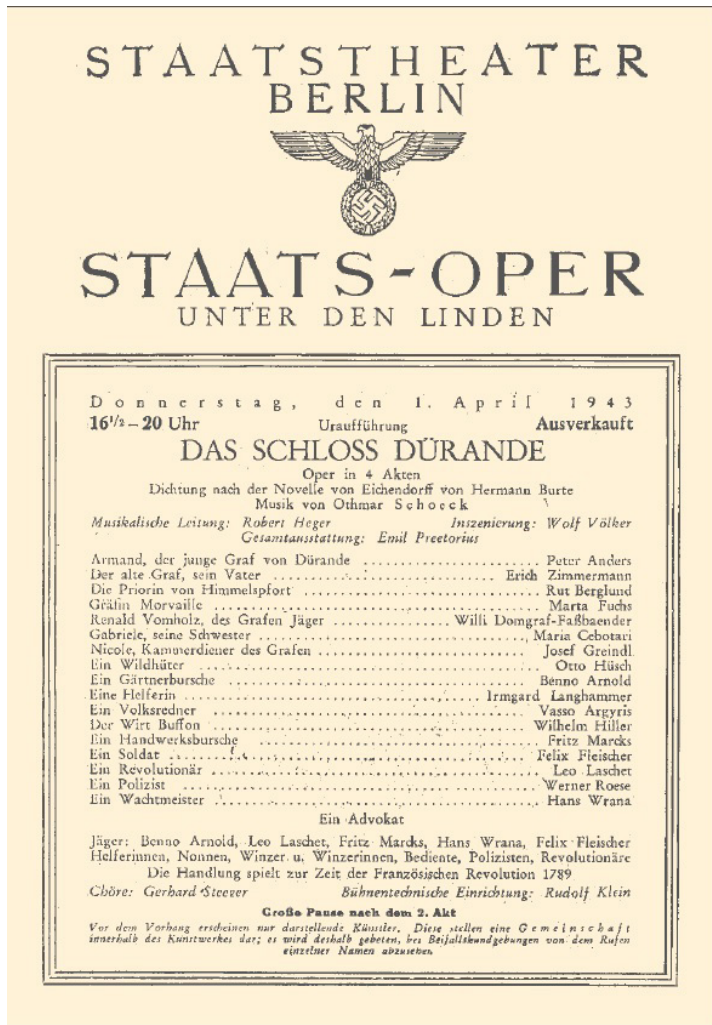


Illustration 2.

Poster of the premiere of the opera
Das Schloß Dürande in Berlin
on April 1, 1943 [2, Titelblatt]

a wider resonance and for his works to be performed under optimal conditions. To this end, he was ready to compromise even with his own conscience. Perhaps he also lacked the courage and determination to say “no” to those whom he respected and whose opinions he was accustomed to consider as determinative⁵. In any case, he probably had no idea that such actions could ruin his entire subsequent career.

This is exactly what happened with the opera *Das Schloß Dürande* when it was staged at the Berlin State Opera on April 1, 1943 (Illustration 2). The premiere turned into a tragic farce, since the Under den Linden theatre had just been rebuilt after the RAF raids in 1941. The explosion of the Dürande castle — which, according to the plot, concludes the opera — was shown “so convincingly that several minutes passed before the terrified audience realised that the explosion was not real” [7, p. 485]. The explosion became a prophecy of both the fate

of the theatre and that of the Third Reich itself. A few months later, the restored theatre was again bombed. Two years later, the Third Reich also fell, having already been predetermined following the conclusion of the Battle of Stalingrad.

The opera itself, which might have seemed to satisfy all the ideological criteria, also faced collapse. After four performances, *Das Schloß Dürande* was withdrawn at the request of Hermann Göring, who supervised the Prussian theatres. While Göring did not attend the premiere, he read the libretto.

⁵ Nevertheless, two of Schoeck’s works can be interpreted as having a political subtext serving as a hidden criticism of Nazism: the *Cantata Op. 49*, composed in 1933, based on texts by Eichendorff (the words about the “new Pied Piper” can be understood as a hint at Hitler), while his satirical six-voice canon was also supposedly aimed at the Nazi leader, see [5, pp. 133–134].

In an angry telegram to Intendant General Heinz Tietjen (*Illustration 3*) Göring called the opera's libretto "sheer nonsense" (*aufgelegter Bockmist*) and demanded that appropriate measures be taken [8, pp. 9–10].

The opera also met with failure in Schoeck's native Zurich a year later. The performances were poorly attended, the absurd libretto having been openly ridiculed by the public, so further performances were cancelled. Schoeck could not be forgiven for having collaborated with the Nazis.

Thus the composer paid a high reputational price for the opportunity to see his work performed in Berlin. With the disappearance of his opera into critical and popular oblivion, his career was ruined, having severe effects on his health. The premiere had become a shameful stain on the composer's biography. Although of course Schoeck bears the responsibility for making the decision, others shared this burden.

For example, the Vienna Universal Edition, headed by Alfred Schlee, argued in favour of a Berlin premiere since believing that the artistic level here would be higher than anywhere else. "Berlin has the advantage of being able to provide an absolutely first-class performance, for which no artistic or technical resources will be spared" [9, p. 57], wrote Schlee on May 14, 1940. At the same time, he opined that a premiere on a small stage would be more useful for promoting the opera.

The famous Swiss patron of the arts Werner Reinhart (1884–1951) also had a huge influence on Schoeck (*Illustration 4*). An amateur clarinetist and the owner of a large fortune (his ancestors had been engaged in trade with India), he was a major influence in the development path of 20th century art. It was thanks to Reinhart that Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* saw the light of day; his other protégés included Hindemith, Honegger, Webern, Krenek, and Pfitzner. For over thirty years, he financed musical life in Winterthur, Switzerland, his partnership with the conductor Hermann Scherchen making it one of the preeminent centres of modern music.⁶ Reinhart also insisted that the premiere of *Das Schloß Dürande*

⁶ For more details on Reinhart's patronage [10].

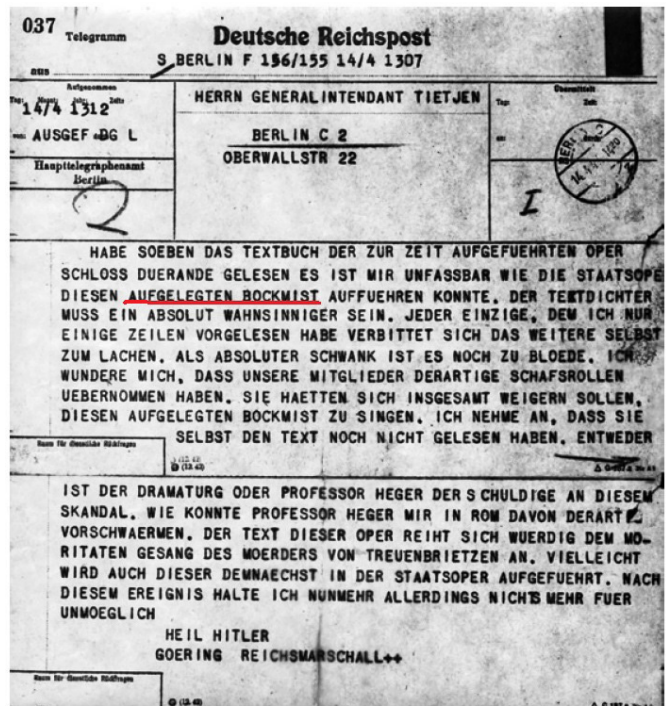


Illustration 3. Telegram from H. Goering to H. Tietjen with a negative assessment of the libretto [2, p. 10]



Illustration 4.
[Werner Reinhart](#) (1945).
(accessed 12.11.2024)

the fate of real people” [4, p. 260], believes musicologist Chris Walton. With the rise of the Nazis to power, Burte was elected to the newly formed Prussian Academy of Arts; in 1936, he became a member of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party. The awarding of the Hebel Prize (*Johann Peter Hebel-Preis*) to him cemented his fame and confirmed his title as “the first and best National Socialist poet” [12, p. 149]. A staged photograph (*Illustration 5*) shows Burte reading Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. An ornament of the swastika, revered by him since his youth⁹, covers the specially made table

should take place “in a first-class German theatre” [7, p. 485]. It was largely on the basis of the philanthropist’s support of Schoeck for many years, that the latter followed his advice and gave the opera to Berlin. It was also Reinhart who introduced Schoeck to the German writer Hermann Burte, the future librettist of the opera.

Libretto and Original Source

Hermann Burte (1879–1960) became one of the lucky writers who were sanctioned to practice this craft in Germany during the 1930s.⁷ His journey, which started from simple poetry in the folk spirit (*im Volkston*)⁸ would lead him to become a leading propagandist of National Socialist ideas. “His writings and correspondence clearly reveal a man whose opinion of himself is far higher than his abilities warrant, who is shameless in his pursuit of fame and money, and who does not seem to care one iota about



Illustration 5.
Hermann Burte reading
Mein Kampf (1941) [1, S. 124]

⁷ For information on how literary life was regulated in Nazi Germany [11, pp. 116–118].

⁸ Even such an august figure as Rainer Maria Rilke succumbed to the charm of Burte's Alemannic lyric poetry, calling one of his poems “a universal German treasure.” [12, p. 148].

⁹ Even before the swastika became a symbol of the Nazi movement, it was understood as a sign of Antisemitism [12, p. 145].

at which the poet sits [13, p. 124]. It was to Burte, then, that Schoeck came with a proposal to work together: “Why don’t we write an opera together?!” And I have a plot: *Das Schloß Dürande* by von Eichendorff! [14, p. 93].

From his youth, Schoeck knew and loved the poetry of Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857) (*Illustration 6*), one of the most famous German Romantics¹⁰; he created numerous songs based on the poet’s texts, which became a continuation of the tradition of Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Wolf. However, in the fervent 1930s, the appeal to Eichendorff, “the most German of all German poets” [16, p. 221], whose work became a cult object in Nazi Germany, could



Illustration 6. Monument to Joseph von Eichendorff. Wangen [2, p. 41]

not help but be interpreted ideologically. “Eichendorff’s faith in future generations and their honest struggle was not disgraced. “On the contrary, it actually found its confirmation through us, the National Socialists” [4, p. 115], wrote Rainer Schlösser, president of the Eichendorff Foundation, in 1935.

The original source for Burte’s opera libretto was Eichendorff’s 1836 novella *Das Schloß Dürande* [*The Durande Castle*]. It is dedicated to the events of the great French Revolution, against the backdrop of which a tragic love drama unfolds. Young Gabrielle, the sister of the gardener at the Durande castle, falls in love with the count’s son Armand. Her brother Renald is sure that this love will destroy Gabrielle. In the process of trying to save his sister, Renald goes mad, killing his lovers one by one, then setting fire to the castle and dying in the fire himself.

The tragedy of heroes as *pars pro toto* represents the tragedy of a destroyed world. Eichendorff, who was born a year before the revolution, reflected his attitude towards it here: he perceives the historical turning point as a catastrophe, violence, the death of the harmonious world of the past, which is plunging into chaos and oblivion.

Burte changes a lot in Eichendorff’s text, updating it in accordance with the demands of Nazi propaganda: “Hitler’s personal cult [...] seems to have become second nature to him” [4, p. 259]. The French Revolution is associated with the Bolsheviks; the main character Renald is now a Communist rebel, while

¹⁰ Nowadays it is customary to interpret it within the framework of Biedermeier [15, pp. 499–501].

Countess Murvay (a character introduced by Burte) represents the aristocracy, which is waiting for a new hero capable of awakening the nation – her words are reminiscent of Nazi slogans “*Deutschland erwache!*” (“Germany, awaken!”) [4, p. 257]. However, the libretto is so obviously mediocre that it even angered Göring himself. Eichendorff’s prose gives way to primitive, pompous and ponderous poetry, saturated with Nazi clichés and slogans: in Burte’s libretto, the “purity of blood” is repeatedly emphasised, which can be understood as a hint at Aryan origins, while the unsavoury character Renald, who joined the revolutionaries and “broke all ties of blood,” is reinterpreted by Burte as a “Jewish Bolshevik” [4, p. 258].

The fall of the Third Reich put an end to the history of the opera: the odious libretto carried Schoeck’s music away into oblivion. The author of a monograph on the composer, Chris Walton, considered only a concert performance of the work to be possible in the future, but not a stage performance: “If we never see this opera on the stage, the world will be a little better” [4, p. 261].

Strategies of “Interpretive Restoration”: “Back to Eichendorff”

It was clear that “disinfection” or denazification of the text was the main prior condition for any revival of the opera.¹¹ Since more than half (60%) of the libretto had to be replaced, it was essentially written anew. The Bernese poet Francesco Micieli was invited to work on the text.¹² With the slogan “Back to Eichendorff” [8, p. 34] he carried out a “reverse transfer” of the poet’s poetic and prose texts into the libretto, which made it possible to tell the story anew, recreating its original atmosphere. The vocabulary was significantly revised, including exclusion of the words “blood,” “people,” “honour,” “eternity”; moreover, certain key words from the original were added, such as “silence.” Below is a small example of the reworking of the text.¹³

The change in the libretto necessitated adjustments to the vocal part. This task was carried out by the Swiss conductor Mario Venzago).¹⁴ When working on an opera, Schoeck often composed the music prior

¹¹ There are other examples of opera re-texting in the history of music, one of the most famous being *A Life for the Tsar / Ivan Susanin* by Mikhail Glinka, about which M. G. Raku writes in detail in his monograph *Musical Classics in the Myth-Making of the Soviet Era* [17, pp. 470–485]. In the numerous revisions of the libretto in the 1920s, as the author convincingly proves, it was not about “the return of a classical masterpiece to the stage, but about the urgent need for Soviet opera to come to it” [17, p. 476]. Despite the differences in context, the respective initiators of the re-texting both of Glinka’s opera and Schoeck’s had to solve a similar problem of replacing the libretto text while preserving the music.

¹² Misieli outlined his principles for working on a libretto [18, pp. 207–210].

¹³ For the full old and new text of the opera [19, pp. 211–330].

¹⁴ Venzago’s work on adapting the vocal part to the new text is described in [8, pp. 42–78].

to the completed libretto, only adding the words to the written music subsequently. Venzago did essentially the same thing. They both inserted or deleted syllables, changed stresses, and adjusted the melodic line and rhythm. The example below [20, p. 189] (*Illustration 7*) allows us to understand how the vocal part was created anew based on the existing outline. Unlike the vocal part, the orchestral part did not change. Many small redactions were carried out to give the action greater compactness and purposefulness.

Old text	New text
Renald Verfluchter Glaube An Ehre und Wort, Sperber und Taube, Beide sind fort!	Renald Leises Schauern In dunklen Bäumen*. Sperber und Taube, Beide sind fort!
Gabriele Ich bin dein, mit Leib und Seele, Lebend, sterbend, Gabriele!	Gabriele Mir flimmert's so schön vor Augen wie dazumal, als du zu mir kamst!

* quote from the poem by J. Eichendorff
At Night (Nachts).

64 57
R. und setzt dein Haus in Brand!

64
R. Es ist so still, dass mir graut in der Einsamkeit.

Illustration 7. An example of the reworking
of a vocal part in a new edition [1, 189]

The revised libretto made it possible to rediscover the opera's music, which can now be perceived as embodying of the spirit of Eichendorff's poetry. Behind it stands the deserved fame of a vocal composer, the author of songs based on Eichendorff's lyrical work, who absorbed the tradition of the refined manner of poetry into the music.¹⁵ As already noted, although the opera is not one of Schoeck's more radical works, the experience of contact with contemporaneous artistic trends left its mark on it: the styles of Late Romanticism and Modernism are refracted through the prism of the new, post-war era, creating a productive synthesis. This is noticeable not only in the harmonic language, where tonal sensations are sometimes blurred, but also in the instrumentation: the luxuriance of the late Romantic orchestra coexists with asceticism and intimacy. Accompanied by vocal voices, the linearity inherent in neoclassicism emerges from the solo instruments; new timbres appear in the orchestra, the most noticeable being the piano; intonations of new corporeality are also discernible, for example, in the foxtrot march depicting the Jacobins.

One of the opera's most vivid scenes features Armand's hunting song with the chorus at the end of the first act (*Example 1*). Weber's forest romance appears here in a late-romantic garb, in which allusions to Richard Strauss and Erich Wolfgang Korngold can be discerned. "At times it seems as if Schoeck had put all the subtlety of his craft into the one area over which he had sole control, namely, orchestration" [4, p. 255], writes Walton.

The other side of the Romantic tradition is revealed in the appearance of the main character Gabrielle, who falls in love with Armand. The skilfully harmonised stylisation of the folk song with which she first appears on stage emphasises the girl's innocence and sincerity (*Example 2*). The simple diatonic melody, representing an embodiment of the "German soul" [4, p. 117], sounds against the background of an impressionistic orchestral accompaniment.

The graceful aria of the Count, Seigneur of the Durande Castle, refers back to a pre-Romantic era stylised as French music of the 18th century typically accompanied by a tambourine, which is skilfully imitated by grace notes of strings and brass (*Example 3*). In Schoeck, Lully's lifeless era appears as a ghost of a sad and obsolete past.

The luxurious love duet of Gabriele and Armand, which is permeated with overtones of Tristan's *Liebestod*, is heard twice in the opera — in the first act and in the finale, where it is periodically interrupted by the music of the French Revolution (*Example 4*). Schoeck also quotes its main symbol, the Marseillaise. Evil — in the traditions of the 20th century — is caricatured by a toy-like mechanistic nature.

¹⁵ Schoeck's music referred to Eichendorff's poems throughout his entire creative career. He created choral works, orchestral and ensemble songs, as well as solo songs for voice and piano [20].

The image shows a page of a musical score for an opera. It is divided into two systems of staves. The first system (measures 57-60) includes vocal parts for Armand and Renard, and instrumental parts for strings and piano. The second system (measures 61-64) includes vocal parts for the chorus and instrumental parts for strings and piano. The score includes dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'cresc.' and performance instructions like 'Bewegter' and 'aus der Ferne'. The lyrics are in German.

Example 1. Armand's Hunting song with chorus. 1 act, m. 3 after fig. 57¹⁶

¹⁶ Schoeck, O. (2018) *Das Schloss Dürande*. Oper in vier Akten nach einer Novelle von Joseph von Eichendorff. Neufassung des originalen Librettos von Hermann Burte (1943) durch Francesco Micieli unter freier Verwendung von Texten Joseph Eichendorffs. Musikalische Adaption: Mario Venzago. In *Zusammenarbeit mit einem Forschungsprojekt der Hochschule der Künste Bern*, Leitung: Thomas Gartmann. Partitur UE 37 391. (pp. 112–113).

Bewegt (♩ = 1)

1. Fl.
2.
1. Hob.
Engl. Hrn.
1. Clar. B.
2.
Bassclar. B.
1. 2.
Horn F
3. 4.
1. 2.
Tramp. C.
2. 3.
1. 2.
Pos.
3.
Tuba
Pt.
Graf

Bewegt (♩ = 1)

I. Vl.
II. Vl.
Br.
Vcl.
Cb.

Da draus - sen stellt die ver-rück-te Zeit, der Sturm wühlt die...

24

1. Hob.
Engl. Hrn.
1.
Fag.
2.
Graf

Zei - ten sich bau-men. Da fast der Sturm die Wel - len durch - wühlt die Einsam-keit. - wacht auf, ihr Traum-ge-set-ten!

I. Vl.
II. Vl.
Br.
Vcl.
Cb.

24

Example 3. The Count's Arioso. 4 act, mm. 237-242¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

molto rall. - - - - - Breit

1. 2. Fl.
1. 2. Hob.
1. 2. Clar. B
Bssclar. B
1. 2. Fag.
1. 2. Horn F
3. 4.
1. 2. Tromp. C
3.
1. 2. Pos.
3.
Klav.
Hrf.
Pk.
Hinter der Szene
1. 2. Picc.
1. 2. Tromp.
Tr.
Gabriella
Armand
(immer leiser) *pp* Al - les ru - lig, du kannst - gehn, und kein Au - ge wird dich sehn. *molto assr*
u Jan - send

molto rall. - - - - - Breit

Bva
I.
Vi.
II.
Br.
Vcl.
Cb.

The image displays a page of a musical score, numbered 92 at the top left. The score is divided into two systems, each starting with a tempo marking: *molto rit.* followed by a dashed line and *Tempo I.* The first system includes staves for various instruments: Flute (1. 2.), Horn (2.), Clarinet (2.), Bass Clarinet (2.), Bassoon (2.), Horn F (2.), Horn C (2.), Trumpet (1. 2.), Trombone (3.), Positone (1. 2.), Percussion (Pk.), and Harp. The second system includes Piccolo (4. 2.), Trumpet (1. 2.), Trombone (2.), Tenor (Ten.), Soprano (Sopr. Alt.), and Chorus (Chor.). The third system includes Violin (I.), Violin (II.), Bassoon (Bz.), Viola (Vel.), and Cello (Cb.). The score contains various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, *ppp morendo*, and *ppp con sord.*. There are also performance instructions like *sva.*, *PK. tr.*, and *Tambor.*. The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature.

Example 4. Reminiscence of the duet of Armand and Gabriele. 4 act. Final, mm. 918–922¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 184–185.

The opera's finale is reminiscent of the ending of Wagner's tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen*: all the heroes die and the Dürande castle is engulfed in flames. However, the end of the old world lacks the grandeur of Wagnerian eschatology, instead being reminiscent of the fatal denouement of a verismo opera. Its outcome is unclear, the last words of the opera are poetic lines from Eichendorff, put into the mouth of the castle servant: "All my life I have been trying to grasp deceptive visions. Who is the hunter here and who is the game?"

Conclusion

The new version of the opera, which was premiered in 2019 at the Meiningen Opera House, met with varied, sometimes contradictory, responses. The titles of the reviews are eloquent: "Opera Renovation," "Second-Hand Political Biedermeier," "White Jacket on a Brown Opera."²⁰ They testify to the conclusion that even today, *Das Schloß Dürande* cannot be extracted from the context of its time, despite the rewritten and "cleaned" libretto – this, apparently, is the essential difference between the updated opera by Schoeck and other, more successful examples of such alterations. The perception of the work is determined not by the music, not by the libretto, and not even by the direction, but by its dark and problematic history. Anti-German sentiment was widespread in Swiss society both during and after World War II: "surrounded by the Axis powers,²¹ Switzerland had long feared, not without reason, a full-scale German invasion; thus, Schoeck's decision to allow the premiere of his opera in Nazi Germany was met with a mixture of incomprehension and anger" [7, p. 485].

However, the historical past, as well as the actual present, differs from the chessboard on which white and black pieces play. On the contrary, it is rich in shades and halftones. In the same way, a living work of art cannot be reduced to its history; it is immeasurably broader than the context of its origin. Beat Felmlí notes: "We need to distinguish between two fundamental aspects. First of all, this is the man and the artist Schoeck. Like everyone else, he lived in a certain era, which forced him to act based on various considerations, such as ethics and egoism, altruism and opportunism. [...] Secondly, there is a piece of music created by the composer Schoeck in this special historical context. This should be analysed and evaluated in accordance with aesthetic, compositional-technical and historical criteria, but not in accordance with the convictions and moods of the author" [5, pp. 131–132]. In the case of *Das Schloß Dürande*, these twin aspects are brought as close as possible to – and even identified with – each other. As long as this remains the case, such interpretive restoration of "ideologically contaminated" musical works seems doomed to failure.

²⁰ Reviews of the premiere are available on the project website, see <https://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/projekte/das-schloss-duerande-von-othmar-schoeck>

²¹ This is understood to refer to the countries of the Nazi bloc, primarily Germany and Italy.

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