

Hans Wind (Kurt Blaukopf), *Die Endkrise der Bürgerlichen Musik*, Schoenberg, and Marxist Musical Historiography

Murray Dineen (draft paper for AMS 2011, please do not cite without permission)

In Vienna 1935, at the age of 21, Kurth Blaukopf published a short treatise on music with the title *Die Endkrise der Bürgerlichen Musik und die Rolle Arnold Schönbergs*, or *The Final Crisis of Bourgeois Music and the Role of Arnold Schoenberg*. He did so under the pseudonym Hans Wind, to which I shall refer when discussing the treatise. After the Anschluss in 1938, Blaukopf emigrated, through Paris, ultimately to Palestine. Returning after the war, he became a central figure in the sociological study of music. Long associated with the Academie and the Hochschule für darstellende Kunst in Vienna, he became in 1977 Austria's first "ordentlich" Professor für Musiksoziologie. Of his many publications and activities, let us note today simply the founding of the institute MEDIACULT (the International Institute for Media, Communication, and Cultural Development), his long association with UNESCO, a biography and studies of Mahler (with his partner, Herta Singer, a renowned Mahler scholar), important studies on the sociology of music, and the text *Pioniere empirische Musikforschung* [Pioneer Empirical Music Research], the bibliography of which led me to the Wind treatise.

Presumably the fascists destroyed large numbers of Wind's book, for it is now a rarity. Since the treatise does not deal with sociology per se, it is not included in Michael Parzer's newly published selection of Blaukopf's writings, *Was ist Musiksoziologie?* References to the treatise in the critical literature are few. In hope of making it better known, I am preparing an English translation with commentary for publication. In 2010, I published an article entitled "Lexicon for a Leftist Aesthetic of Music: Hans Wind's Chart of the *Gesetze der Kunst*," in the *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, which deals primarily with an aesthetic model. It is to my knowledge the only extended examination of the treatise to date.

Today, however, I shall focus on the historical materialist chronology, which starts from what Wind calls "Feudalism" and ends with Schoenberg as a reactionary revolutionary, become the *Wegweiser* of bourgeois music in final crisis. Wind's treatise is brief, elliptic, indeed at times cryptic, and so I shall amplify his thought, drawing connections that are not necessarily made explicit in his prose. I shall concentrate upon the historical materialist chronology, but finish with general observations about the importance of the treatise.

I call this a Marxist treatise, although neither Marx nor Marxism are mentioned by name therein. I do so for the following reasons. First, the terms *bourgeois* and *bourgeoisie*, in fact all terms indicative of class, are defined in light of a class-based materialist history of revolution and reaction. (The term *proletariat* is used only twice; both instances describe the bourgeoisie in light of class drift toward the proletariat – the "proletarianization" of the bourgeoisie in later capitalism.) Secondly, the notion of base and superstructure – *unterbau* and *überbau* – is applied to describe the bourgeois birth of music under capitalism; for example, the base and superstructure are fully aligned at the birth of "well-tempered" musical instruments. Thirdly, the terms *consumption* [*Genuß*] and commodity [*Ware*] are defined by capitalism; commodity in particular is defined as the property of an object when divorced from the labour exerted to produce it. Fourthly, the

influence of Hegelian dialectic as transformed by Marx and Engels is patent, in examples of the “negation of negation” and of the transformation of “quantity into quality.” All dialectics are seen ultimately in light of class struggle. (That said, there are no instances of the eleventh Feuerbachian thesis; the treatise is not an invocation of revolution, but contents itself with diagnosis, with a little prognosis added tentatively.) Fifth, Marxist sources are drawn upon extensively: Hans Eisler is cited in particular (a lecture reprinted in *Rebel in Music* and an essay from the periodical *Anbruch* entitled “Arnold Schönberg: Musikalische Reaktionär), but also Adorno, the essay “Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik [On the Social Situation of Music].” Other Marxists cited include August Thalheimer (and by extension Franz Mehring), the little known theorist Lu Marten, as well as Max Weber, hardly a Marxist per se, but surely a sociologist with leftist inclinations seized upon by Marxist cultural theorists of Central Europe. (And elsewhere, Blaukopf noted the influence of Lukacs upon his thought.) Lastly, I call it Marxist because the historical materialist chronology is traced in terms of the growth of capitalism in light of the exploitation of labour through commodity consumption. Add these together and there would seem to be just cause to call Wind’s treatise if not Marxist at least Marxian.

Wind’s sources are not exclusively Marxist, however, for he turned as well to writings by Egon Wellesz, Joseph Hauer, Guido Adler, Herman Abert, Arnold Schering, and Ferruccio Busoni, as well as lesser known scholars – Max Dietz on revolutionary French opera, Louis Schneider on Monteverdi, Wilhelm Maler a theorist, and Hans Mersmann a historian. Busoni and the essayist Adolf Weisman are the object of polemics that simmer below the surface of the treatise.

Wind’s historical materialist chronology is set forth in the first of the book’s two chapters, entitled “Bourgeois Music: The Revolution of Feudal Music through Capitalism.” Bourgeois music, in fact, is preceded by both what Wind calls Feudalism and an Aristocratic secularism. And the era of bourgeois music itself devolves into four periods: bourgeois revolution (in alliance with the working class), bourgeois reaction (in opposition to the working class), bourgeois Romanticism (where the reality of the social situation conflicts with bourgeois consciousness), and bourgeois Imperialism (where the bourgeoisie exists in a state of opposition to itself, in an advanced stage of capitalism). Bourgeois Imperialism (the state of affairs in Wind’s time) is followed by a future describe only briefly.

The transition between these periods involves a chain-link dialectic produced by *Aufhebung*, a term – ever puzzling – that Wind uses often and in various senses. It is sometimes translated as *sublation* or *supercession*, terms equally puzzling. As Hegel scholars point out, the German verb *aufheben* has two principal senses in usage: “to cancel, to do away with, but also to preserve or take up to a higher level” [Robert Sinnerbrink, *Understanding Hegelianism* (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2007), 24]. Both senses will be observed here.

For example, Wind holds that Feudal music is primarily monophonic in style, with service as its function – a “music of service” as Wind puts it, meaning presumably its function in the Catholic Rite. Musical Feudalism is negated by the polyphonic music of the aristocratic secular courts. Music’s courtly function is consumption – a nascent capitalist consumption. As

aristocratic courtly polyphony negates Feudal monophony, however, polyphony is negated in turn by bourgeois homophony. In bourgeois music, both melody and polyphony are assumed within a homophonic texture, with fully matured forms of capitalist consumption as its function. Bourgeois music, in other words, produces an *Aufhebung*, annulling both Feudal monophony and courtly polyphony, while carrying them forth at the same time to a new level, homophony.

The functional, tensile harmony of bourgeois homophony will in its turn be negated by tone colour (*Klang*, as Wind calls it), and tone colour negated thereafter in a new music, the music of the future as Wind projects it. (Schoenberg, as we shall see shortly, is incapable of this *Aufhebung*, and thus he leads to the “crisis” of Wind’s title.)

A similar dialectical chain applies itself to musical function. The forms of aristocratic courtly consumption – the secular forms – negate the Feudal function of service. (Let us say that in the secular courts a notion of individual integrity arises that is not fully dependent upon service to a higher entity.) In turn, exclusive or privileged aristocratic consumption is negated by the economic pluralism of bourgeois musical production; think, for example, of the growth of the public concert, after Salomon. This is not to say that the bourgeois revolution does away with either service or consumption, but instead both are carried to a higher level by bourgeois capitalism. Consumption is no longer the privilege of the aristocracy; bourgeois musical commodities are available widely to everyone, regardless of social rank. Capitalist consumption of commodities, however, reconstitutes a feudal-like form of service – the servitude of the musical worker, indeed all workers, to the exchange value.

In addition to the “negation of the negation,” the classic Marxist-Hegelian dialectic of quantity and quality are at work in Wind’s thought. For example, Feudal monophony involves one voice part. Aristocratic polyphony transforms this in quantity – multiple counterpointed melodies in several voice parts. And bourgeois homophony completes the transformation in terms of quality: in homophony, multiple polyphonic melodies or counterpoints are transformed into successions of unitary harmonies. Many voices in other words are transformed in quality into single chords. In bourgeois revolutionary music this transformation produces a harmonic factor: tensile harmony, the tendency for chords to move from tension to resolution. In turn, in bourgeois Romantic music the quantity of tones encompassed by bourgeois harmony will grow (through the addition of 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths) so as to produce a change in quality from harmonic tension to harmonic colour. In other words, the addition of upper-function chord tones will oppose harmonic tension with a new factor, *Klang* – *sonority* or *tone colour*. Emphasizing colour in lieu of dynamic tension, late Bourgeois music will substitute Romantic stagnation for revolutionary drive.

Wind speaks, then, of a chain-like dialectics. His dialectic is compounded negation, quantity transformed into quality. By 1935 this produces mass consumption in service to musical capitalism. As Wind puts it (evoking Hans Eisler): “Capitalism puts the work in blatant opposition to the reproduction of labour power.” And capitalism, “separates work and consumption – an authentic opposite to the real world.”

For Wind, the period of bourgeois revolution (the first of the bourgeois era) takes place in small circles of production with limited economic scope. The revolutionary bourgeoisie are united with the “oppressed classes” against the aristocracy. Its musical forms are the revolutionary opera (Wind cites Jean Francois Le Sueur) and the *Massenlied*. In the subsequent

period of bourgeois reaction, the bourgeoisie separates itself from the lower classes, the working class in particular. Having expropriated (and thus negated) aristocratic private property through revolution, the bourgeoisie transforms it (again dialectically) into bourgeois private property. Bourgeois private property becomes a quality that distinguishes the bourgeoisie from the working class.

Being a materialist, Wind considers the means, not merely the mode, of production. Bourgeois revolutionary music is realistic in style. The heroic bourgeois orchestra with its dynamic capacity for expressing realism negates the static quality of the principal Feudal instrument, the organ. While the organ is limited in its ability to express dynamics, the orchestra becomes more and more capable of doing so; thus, much as bourgeois capitalism becomes more and more dynamic in quality, so too the bourgeois orchestra is capable of expanding dynamically *ad infinitum*. For this reason, Wind calls the heroic symphony in Beethoven's hands "realistic" – a realistic representation of the dynamics of capitalism. Bourgeois reactionary music, however, is psychological in style, epitomized by the introverted, socially constrained genres of chamber music, especially Lieder. Whereas revolutionary music is produced by and for the masses, from within the masses, bourgeois reactionary music is produced by the genius, an intellect unimpaired by any kind of class consciousness.

As noted, base and superstructure align for the first time in bourgeois music. Wind cites Eisler: the concert form introduces the commodity relation to music. The purchase of the ticket, the concert music specialist who produces musical commodities, even the sale of printed music – these are all capitalist musical commodities designed for consumption and profit.

The advent of harmony as a technical factor marks the bourgeois shift to commodification. Wind calls it a "deciding factor": the wholeness, let us say, of the commodity form depends upon dynamic harmonic connections. Harmonic music, as noted above, is dynamic, expansive like capitalism itself. But it is also a commodity form – by its wholeness it forgets the exchange value and produces the semblance of integrity, of a completeness within itself.

The principal genre of bourgeois musical harmony is the symphony. For Wind, it spans both revolutionary and reactionary bourgeois periods (only to languish in the periods of bourgeois Romanticism and Imperialism). Wind again cites Eisler: Beethoven symphonies are a form of bourgeois "conception transformed to become a kind of ideology [*Weltanschauung*]"; "the essence of the symphony is concrete reality regulated in strict measure by homophonic construction." The reality to which Eisler alludes, presumably, is that of bourgeois musical commodity consumption, wherein harmony is joined dialectically with melody in a homophonic texture that "regulates" the commodity.

The genre of "Heroic symphony," however, is about a hero, and thus about a psychology – that of the hero being led into battle. In this regard, the revolutionary Heroic form contains within it the seeds of reaction, a psychological concentration upon the self in distinction to the collective. In the Romantic reaction, this becomes a concentration upon the *burger* in lieu of the masses.

Chamber music embodies similarly the spirit of bourgeois reaction. It is psychological rather than realistic in style, idealistic in form (as *l'art pour l'art*), and reactionary in content (as a diversion from real life, hiding the materialist fact of human labour) unlike the *Massenlied*. By

*realistic*, we mean here not merely about real things, as in the sense of tone painting in Monteverdi, but rather about the mode or means of production, wherein the musical labour of the producer is acknowledged. Whereas in its dynamism, bourgeois revolutionary music is “real” in the sense of the dynamic reality of capitalism, chamber music on the other hand is illusory, concerned with the illusion of the self as an integral whole.

The late bourgeois phase of Romanticism produces the first signs of the “final” crisis, the transformation of the symphony orchestra, for example. In the revolutionary bourgeois symphony, “the emancipation of the orchestra from the organ,” as noted, is a “pre-condition for” realism. The bourgeois symphony stands as a unit, devoted to expressing the real circumstances – a revolutionary equality among all forces. In the reactionary symphony, individual orchestral instruments come to stand “in opposition to the orchestra as a whole.” Presumably Wind refers here to a growing distinction in orchestral labour, between first desks (who are accorded soloist roles) and the collective orchestra. The new genre of the solo concerto embodies *Klang*, for it is principally sonority – the colour of the solo instrument versus the color of the section – that distinguishes materially between soloist and orchestra. Through colour, the soloist reproduces the element of psychology that Wind finds characteristic of bourgeois reactionary chamber music – the concentration upon the individual in distinction to the collective. Again the distinction could be said to be dialectic: the singular Feudal organist is negated by the mass of orchestral labourers (quantity into quality). These in turn are negated by the specialized work of music geniuses – the orchestral soloist (first desk or the concerto solo) who raises both the Feudal singular and bourgeois musical labour to a new level. The deciding factors in the bourgeois crisis, then, are *Klang* – the sound of a good solo violin or piano – and a psychological identity not shared by the masses.

The subjective reactionary style is fully at home in the genre of Romantic Lied. For Wind, Lieder makes “melody the dominating element and harmony the accompaniment,” thus degrading the dialectic whole of the revolutionary symphony, where melody and harmony achieve a dynamic unity. As noted, harmony is degraded further by upper-function chord tones – 9ths, 11ths, 13ths – produced by stacking thirds above the customary triads and seventh chords. These added tones, which Wind calls “function obscuring,” serve two ends: they dilute the tension – the tensile strength – of customary harmony, and in lieu of harmonic tension, they substitute the factor of *Klang*, the colour of harmony.

*Klang*, Wind suggests, has always been a central aspect of melody, and thus it was a factor in Feudal monophony, and subsequently in polyphony and homophony. In bourgeois Romanticism, it rises dialectically as the negation of the tensile harmony of the revolutionary symphony. Thus Romanticism produces a late bourgeois contradiction, the conflict between sonority and harmonic tension. The rise of bourgeois Impressionism marks the victory of sonority. As Wind puts it succinctly:

The technical boundary between Romanticism and Impressionism is to be found where the quantity of harmonic chord tones [stacked thirds] transforms into the quality of *Klang* and where the alteration of harmonic chords transforms from a means of intensifying function into a means of obscuring function.

This colouristic shift, says Wind, responds to a need implicit in capitalism for ever more intense forms of stimulation.

The decline of Romanticism ushers in a new period, bourgeois Imperialism. Wind cites August Thalheimer, for whom bourgeois Imperialism is a period of chaos, and Hans Mersmann, who states Impressionism marks the “end of history.” For Wind, the anarchistic character of capitalist Imperialist modes of production produces this terminal state of anarchy.

The transformation of harmony – Romantic, then Impressionistic – takes us to the feet of Schoenberg and “The Final Crisis of Bourgeois Music,” Wind’s second chapter. Schoenberg could have fused the chaos of late Bourgeois music, resolved the conflict of harmony and *Klang*, and heralded a new historical materialist stage. But the synthesis of tensile harmony and static *Klang* eluded him; as a bourgeois Impressionist, he could not resolve the fundamental contradiction between the drive of revolutionary harmony and the languor of Romantic harmony. And his consciousness was firmly bourgeois, locked into his individual identity. Were he to have understood his historical materialist position, Schoenberg would have elevated both harmony and *Klang* to a new synthetic level. Wind grants only a glimpse of this potential synthesis: in it both service and consumption are retained, but unencumbered by the commodity fetish and false class consciousness.

Mired in his class sensibilities, Schoenberg is incapable of this dialectic. He fails as a revolutionary. As Eisler puts it: Schoenberg created a revolution so as to play the role of reactionary. In this role, his only contribution is that of symptom or indication, *Wegweiser*, of what wasn’t and thus what might be done.

Schoenberg claims an inheritance from both Mahler and Debussy, but in both instances the result is a cul-de-sac. Mahler appears to reconcile Romantic need with heroic symphonic tradition – the *Aufhebung* of tensile harmony with melody taken from Lieder. But this is only a phantom, the expression of an Imperialist need to sunder things, as Wind puts it. Debussy pursues the *Klang* to a point where he cannot effect a return to harmony, and thus in historical materialist terms his oeuvre constitutes a dead end. For Wind, Schoenberg, “without abandoning the standpoint of bourgeois music, finds ... a form in which these antagonisms [melody, harmony, *Klang*] can still move.” But only move, not resolve.

Schoenberg cannot succeed here because an alteration of musical function is necessary. Such a change in function lay at the feet of J. S. Bach. Wind quotes Schering: Bach progressed in function from “the religious to the dramatic,” to the dramatic representation of an individual folk voice [*Volkrufe*], the representation of an individual in devoted service to God. The alteration of function here is from religious service to the representation of devotion. From actual service to the portrayal of service. This is the transformation Bach effected.

No such transformation of function takes place in Schoenberg. Instead, in his atonal and twelve-tone works such as the Third String Quartet, and the Piano Piece op. 33a, Schoenberg “negates harmony mechanistically, instead of shaping it.” He is thus the “artist of Imperialism”; “Impressionism lives within him,” even though, unlike Debussy, he retains a certain harmonic element in works such as the *Gurrelieder*. He cannot, in other words, rework the function of

music by transcending Impressionism and its bourgeois limitations.

Schoenberg the theorist proposes the *Klangfarbe*, a music that operates only in the dimension of tone color. For Wind, this is utopian. The *Klang* encompasses both sound and harmony. Citing Joseph Hauer, Wind asserts that musical sound cannot do without harmony, for harmony is implicit in every tone. Thus Schoenberg is wrong in breaking off *Klang* “mechanically” from harmony. Their opposition is false, for both are factors of the other of necessity.

Wind’s materialist chronology is filled with several such false oppositions to harmony, all of which are overturned in subsequent dialectic revolution. Feudalism, for example, establishes an ideological opposition, the melody of chant must avoid the seductions of harmony; ideologically the two must be kept separate from one another, “cut off mechanically from one another.” In the bourgeois revolution and reaction the two are brought together in the musical commodity but only as antagonistic factors – the sound colour of upper function harmonies will severely undermine the tensile strength of functional harmony. Ultimately, Schoenberg will in crisis concentrate upon either *Klangfarbe* or melody to the exclusion of harmony in his reactionary revolutionary works.

Wind puts it thus. The twelve-tone method should allow “for the shaping of harmonic connections in a comprehensive and logical manner.” Such is not always the case with Schoenberg. When he applies himself to harmony, Wind says, he “stumbles brilliantly on the *Klang*.” But when he applies himself to the *Klang*, he “neglects the harmony.” His latest, atonal work is only *Klang* and melody, for he “eliminates harmony completely.” There is no *Aufhebung* of harmony and *Klang*, and thus Schoenberg like Moses cannot transcend his musical bourgeois identity and is denied entry to the next era.

As noted, Wind does not envision at length a music of the future. From what little he says, however, we can determine something of its shape. Simply put, music in the future will retain the breadth of consumption so characteristic of large circles of capitalist production. But a capitalist form of consumption will be negated by a disciplinary function reminiscent of Feudalism. The disciplinary function will be “realism” – the constraint to reflect “real” life objectively and thus consciously – and in this sense it will negate the commodity fetish. Implicit here is an *Aufhebung* – the music of the future will raise consumption and service to a new level. It will be a broad based music in which the mode of production, the base and superstructure, is not obscured. Beyond suggestion, however, Wind seems unwilling to go.

In this paper, I have recounted something of Wind’s historical materialist chronology with its chain-like process of dialectic. Let me conclude by discussing a few issues – historical materialist and otherwise – raised by the treatise, some of which will be of interest to music scholars. First and foremost, it constitutes one of the few lengthy Marxist studies of music from Central Europe between the wars, indeed to either side as well. (In scope it is rivaled by only Janos Marothy’s *Music and the Bourgeois, Music and the Proletarian* from Hungary, 1974.) Elsewhere during our conference, an award will be made in the name of Paul Amadeus Pisk, but little is known of his pre-war contribution to the Leftist criticism of music and the contributions of other Leftist critics such as Paul Bekker and David J. Bach. These, however, were made largely

in the periodical literature, and thus are limited in scope. Wind's treatise, then, is noteworthy for in size and scope as a rarity. Secondly, Wind's thoughts are noteworthy as Adorno reception (and perhaps even more so as Eisler reception); the influence of these two musical thinkers is writ large across Wind's treatise, as if it were in some part a gloss upon their work. Thirdly, the treatise is a noteworthy herald of Kurt Blaukopf's career, although a complete study of the relationship between the treatise and Blaukopf's later work lies well beyond the scope of this paper. One of the central pillars of such a study, however, would be musical empiricism, by which I mean a moderated Marxist study of music in society, not an extension of Mach's paradigms.

With the issue of Wind's empiricism I shall conclude my recommendation. In Wind's treatise empiricism surfaces in a polemic with Adolf Weisman. According to Wind, Weisman proposes in his book "Music in the World Crisis" that a synthesizing Genius [*zusammenfassende Genie*] will produce an end to the crisis. In Wind's response, we hear the criteria of base and superstructure: the crisis is economic, and no conception of artistic "timeless Genius" addresses the economic fundamentals. We also hear a plea for empiricism: the true study of music must rest with material fact, facts substantiated by objective reality, in Wind's case the economic reality of capitalism. And we detect a well-placed suspicion of the "New Man" myth, which appears under many guises in socialist and fascist developments in this time period.

It is this suspicion of the "New Man," perhaps, that lies at the root of Wind's most important theme: the place of Arnold Schoenberg in the resolution of the crisis. Here, the treatise, with help from Eisler, contributes a perspective without precedent I believe. I have tried to address the crisis of Schoenberg's politics on several occasions, most recently in *Culture Unbound*, in an article on his radical *Harmonielehre*. But I never came near the perspective offered by Wind. For Wind, the problem with Schoenberg lies not simply in his music, although admittedly the importance of the *Klang* in the atonal and twelve-tone works is a pressing issue. Nor is it that Schoenberg, as a genius, is out of step with his time. Instead, Schoenberg is perfectly in step with his time (and in this regard, Wind anticipates Adorno's argument made in *Prisms* and the *Philosophy of New Music*). Schoenberg is to the moment: he is the bourgeois radical revolutionary, capable of postulating revolution but incapable of bringing it off. This recalls an anecdote told by Schoenberg. Asked by an officer during his military service if he was indeed this "notorious Schoenberg," he replied: "Someone had to be, so I let it be me." There is a familiar ring here. Let us recast it after Eisler and Wind: someone had to invent a radical music at the same time so reactionary as to be incapable of effecting a revolution. On Wind's account, Schoenberg let it be him. Thank you.