

***Melos* (1920-1934)**

The German music journal *Melos* [MEL] was published from February 1920 to August 1934, with a lapse in publication from September 1922 until September 1924. Initiated by the well-known conductor Hermann Scherchen (1891-1966) early in his career, the journal promoted modern music and the study of the relationship between music, musical life and society.¹

Neuendorff & Moll (Berlin-Weissensee) was the first publisher of *Melos*. From October 1920, the journal was published by Melos-Verlag GmbH (Berlin-Friedenau), from January 1927, by Schott's Söhne (Mainz), and from January 1928 until the journal's demise again by the Melos-Verlag, now as a subsidiary of Schott's Söhne. While the place of publication changed, the office of the general editor remained in Berlin. After August 1934, the German fascist government took control of the journal and renamed it *Neues Musikblatt*. Following World War II Schott's Söhne revived *Melos* in 1946. This RIPM publication treats *Melos* during its pre-war years.

Of the thirteen volumes produced during this period, the first five (1920-26) are irregular in their dates of publication and in the number of annual issues.² The first volume was published from February to December 1920. The second volume was published from January 1921 to September 1921; the third began in November of 1921. The second issue of the third volume appeared without a date, and thereafter only two more issues appeared (June and August 1922), before a two-year hiatus. *Melos* resumed publication in August 1924 with its fourth volume, which ran until September 1925. The fifth volume dates from October 1925 to December 1926. From January 1927, when Schott's Söhne took over the journal, until 1933 each volume contained twelve monthly issues, occasionally published as double issues. In its final year, 1934, the journal produced eight issues, the last four of which were combined into two double issues. The number of pages per volume varies from 266 to 636, with issues usually consisting of forty-four pages.³ Pagination is continuous throughout each volume. Until the takeover by Schott's Söhne, financial backing for the journal came from Herbert Graf, the noted opera director and son of the successful publisher Max Graf.⁴

The journal's first general editor was Hermann Scherchen, who added *Melos* to his responsibilities as director of a workmen's choir, as a member of the Scherchen string

¹ According to Scherchen, the main areas of focus for *Melos* were: a) the problem of breaking the boundaries of tonality, b) the relationship of tone and word (especially in opera), c) music's relation to other arts, and d) the sociological structure of musical life. See MEL 1, no. 1 (February 1920): 1-3.

² Number of issues per volume: Vol. 1: 21; Vol. 2: 12; Vol. 3: 5; Vol. 4: 12; Vol. 5: 12.

³ However, in the first volume that contains bi-monthly issues, each usually consists of 24 pages; double issues generally contain 84 pages.

⁴ Herbert Graf also initiated the concert series of the Melos-Gemeinschaft in Berlin. Graf later taught at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, PA.

quartet and as lecturer at the Musikhochschule in Berlin.⁵ Scherchen initiated a discussion about tonality with articles on Schoenberg⁶ and Richard Strauss,⁷ and was the first to discuss the term “Neue Klassizität” [neoclassicism] in the journal.⁸ His involvement with *Melos* lasted only until the spring of 1921, when he left Berlin to conduct the Grotrian-Steinweg Orchestra at the Leipzig Konzertverein. In 1928 Scherchen was called to Königsberg to head the music department of the local radio station and to conduct its new orchestra. *Melos* reported enthusiastically about his successes there.⁹

Fritz-Fridolin Windisch (1897-?) served as general editor of *Melos* from May 1921 until temporary suspension of publication in August 1922. Windisch was also artistic director of the society “Melos, Gemeinschaft zur Erkenntnis zeitgenössischer Musik e.V.” [Society for the Understanding of Contemporary Music] in Berlin,¹⁰ later headed by the composer-conductors and *Melos* contributors Philipp Jarnach and Heinz Tiessen.

Publication resumed in August 1924, with Hans Mersmann (1891-1971) as general editor, a position he held for most of the journal’s life. In 1917, Mersmann founded the Musikarchiv für Deutsche Volkslieder [Music Archive for German Folk Song] and was its director until 1933. He received his *Habilitation* at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin in 1921 with a study on a new method of research on the folk song, and became a lecturer there in 1927. In 1932 he was appointed head of the music department of the radio station Deutsche Welle,¹¹ but in 1933 the fascist government stripped him of all public positions, including his work at *Melos*. Mersmann contributed regularly to the journal with, for example, extensive overviews of recent music publications.¹² He demonstrated an interest in creating a dialogue about modern music and society with his first articles, “Musikalische Kulturfragen” [Questions on music culture]¹³ and “Die Empfangenden” [The recipients].¹⁴ The first issue of *Melos* edited by Mersmann (August 1924) featured articles by noted writers on the state of music in Berlin (Mersmann), Vienna (Paul Amadeus Pisk), London (Edwin Evans) and Prague (Erich Steinhard), as well as an account of the activities of the new Internationale Gesellschaft für neue Musik [International Society for Contemporary Music] from Salzburg (Egon Wellesz). The

⁵ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1st ed., s.v. “Scherchen, Hermann.”

⁶ MEL 1, no. 1 (February 1920): 9-10.

⁷ MEL 1, no. 9 (June 1920): 198-204; MEL 1, no. 11 (July 1920): 244-46.

⁸ MEL 1, no. 11 (July 1920): 242-43.

⁹ *Melos* printed Scherchen’s speech on accepting the position in MEL 7, no. 12 (December 1928): 605-08. See also Heinrich Strobel, “Scherchens Funkreise” [Scherchen’s radio tour] in MEL 8, no. 12 (December 1929): 547-48. There is also regular mention of developments in Königsberg in the column “Rundfunkumschau” by Ernst Latzko and in the miscellaneous section.

¹⁰ See advertisement in MEL 2, no. 10 (August 1921) following the title page.

¹¹ MEL 11, no. 5/6 (May/June 1932): 208 (Miscellaneous section).

¹² With the column “Musikliteratur,” Mersmann expanded on the lists of publications assembled in the early issues of *Melos* by Wilhelm Altmann.

¹³ MEL 1, no. 1 (February 1920): 42-43.

¹⁴ MEL 1, no. 4 (April 1920): 111-16.

issue also contained an article by Fritz Jöde, one of the leading personalities in the “Jugendmusikbewegung” [German youth music movement]. This was the first of many articles in *Melos* about the movement,¹⁵ which was viewed as employing a fresh approach to music education, possibly able to span the gap between the general public and what was increasingly seen as an elitist group of modern music composers. Topics of interest for both the movement and the journal were, for example, early polyphonic music and historical performance practice,¹⁶ “Gemeinschaftsmusik” [Music for playing socially], and “Hausmusik” [Music for the home].

Heinrich Strobel (1898-1970), a major contributor to *Melos* beginning in 1925, became general editor in March 1933. From 1927 to 1933 he was also music critic for the *Berliner Börsenkurier*, and from 1934 to 1938 wrote for the *Berliner Tageblatt*.¹⁷ Strobel’s articles in *Melos* include introductions to the composers Max Butting¹⁸ and Kurt Weill,¹⁹ essays on Stravinsky,²⁰ discussions of the state of the opera in Berlin, and a large number of reviews of works and performances. Strobel was in charge of a regular column, beginning in 1928, on musical life in Germany, titled “Zeitschau” [Review of the times]. Together with Mersmann and Hanns Gutman, Strobel also contributed to the column “Zeitschriftenschau” that offered reviews of other German and international music journals. Strobel remained with *Melos* until the journal’s demise in 1934, and continued as general editor of the journal under its new name, *Neues Musikblatt*, until 1939. He was again general editor of *Melos* when it was revived by Schott’s Söhne after World War II. Strobel lived in France during World War II.

Every issue of the journal contains a mixture of full-length articles on diverse musical subjects, reviews of books and performances, and an overview of recent publications. Articles in *Melos* discuss the general state of the arts and especially music since the social upheaval brought upon Europe by the Great War (World War I). Numerous articles state the need for a new kind of music composition and performance, for a renunciation of romanticism and what was seen as indulgence in self-expression. At the same time, numerous articles view the development of modern music as the outgrowth of music’s natural historical development.

The first issues of *Melos* feature a series of articles entitled “Der neue Strom” [The new movement] by Heinz Tiessen, in which the conductor gives an overview of the state of new music and an historical perspective that compares the works of Wagner, Debussy,

¹⁵ This includes a special issue on the Jugendmusikbewegung, MEL 4, no. 12 (September 1925).

¹⁶ For example, Hans David, “Trügerische Aufführungstraditionen” [Deceptive traditions of performance practice], MEL 5, no. 11/12 (December 1926): 355-64.

¹⁷ *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1st ed., s.v. “Strobel, Heinrich.”

¹⁸ MEL 6, no. 1 (January 1927): 23-29.

¹⁹ MEL 6, no. 10 (October 1927): 427-33.

²⁰ “Strawinskys Weg,” MEL 8, no. 4 (April 1929): 158-62; “Vom Apollon zur Psalmensymphonie,” MEL 10, no. 7 (July 1931): 219-24; “Strawinsky privat,” MEL 10, no. 10 (October 1931): 315-18; “Strawinskys Violinkonzert,” MEL 10, no. 11 (November 1931): 377-79.

Richard Strauss, Schoenberg, and Busoni.²¹ Also in the first issue, the influential critic Adolf Weißmann writes about the need for modern pianists to analyze thoughtfully the works they perform and to renounce virtuosity.²² Hugo Leichtentritt shows historical links between modern polyphony, atonality and pre-classical music.²³ In 1925, a special issue is dedicated to the influence of historical musicology on modern music,²⁴ and Hermann Erpf points out the similarities in instrumentation in classic, romantic and modern music.²⁵

A large number of issues were *Sonderhefte* [special issues], in which all or most of the full-length articles are dedicated to one subject.²⁶ Articles in an issue about the Salzburg Music Festival are printed in German, English and French.²⁷ Three issues treat the state of musical life and research in the new Soviet Union²⁸ and another two issues are about *Melos* itself.²⁹ Of special interest is an issue on the decentralization of musical life away from Berlin.³⁰

Part of the discussion on modern music was the search for a new vocabulary that would express the departure from Romanticism while also indicating the new values for content and form. In this context, the terms “Objektivität” [objectivity], “Sachlichkeit” [being factual or unemotional] and “Neue Sachlichkeit” appear. A reference to historical artistic ideals and musical forms appears in the terms “Klassizismus,” “Junge Klassizität,” “Neue Klassizität” and “Neoklassizismus.” Also, in the early years of *Melos*, the term expressionism is used as a contrast to impressionism.

The most prominently featured composer in *Melos* is Paul Hindemith, who was viewed as an ideal modern musician, embodying the unity of composer and performer and a commitment to modern music in compositions both for the concert hall and for private performance by amateur musicians. Much attention is also given to Igor Stravinsky with his ever-changing styles, and Kurt Weill who tried to combine social message with high standards of compositional technique. The collaboration of Weill with the author Berthold Brecht—on projects such as *Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt*

²¹ MEL 1, no. 1 (February 1920): 5-8; MEL 1, no. 2 (February 1920): 26-28; MEL 1, no. 4 (April 1920): 78-82.

²² “Der Weg zum modernen Pianisten” [The path to the modern pianist], MEL 1, no. 1 (February 1920): 15-18.

²³ “Die Quellen des neuen in der Musik” [Sources for the new in music], MEL 1, no. 2 (February 1920): 28-33.

²⁴ MEL 4, no. 7/8 (February 1925).

²⁵ MEL 4, no. 10 (May 1925): 523-34.

²⁶ For a complete list of special issues, see Marc-André Roberge, “Focusing Attention: Special Issues in German-Language Music Periodicals of the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” *Research Chronicle* 27 (1994): 71-99. This list is not correct in all details.

²⁷ MEL 3, no. 4/5 (August 1922).

²⁸ MEL 4, no. 9 (April 1925); MEL 4, no. 10 (May 1925); MEL 5, no. 6 (March 1926).

²⁹ MEL 9, no. 2 (February 1930); MEL 11, no. 1 (January 1932).

³⁰ MEL 9, no. 7 (July 1930).

Mahagonny, *Der Jasager* and *Der Lindberghflug* (also set by Hindemith)—is reviewed in *Melos*. Curiously, while Schoenberg is considered by the writers of *Melos* as one of the most important composers after 1918, little space is dedicated to the defense of his departure from tonality and his development of twelve-tone music.³¹ In 1927, Mersmann still calls him the leader of a spiritual revolution, but already sees him as belonging to an earlier state of the development of music.³² Bartók refers to Schoenberg in a defense of atonal music,³³ but there are also essays by Josef Matthias Hauer,³⁴ who had developed another twelve-tone system apart from Schoenberg.

While the original aims of the journal are upheld throughout its run, the content and format shift slightly with changes in editorship. For example, the first years regularly contain (until temporary suspension of *Melos* in August 1922) musical supplements of songs or movements of instrumental works by modern German composers.³⁵ Later, musical supplements are sporadic and mostly contain musical examples for the articles and reviews. Throughout the journal's run, a column with varying titles contains miscellaneous news: "Musikleben" [Musical life], "Nachrichten" [News], and "Notizen" [Notes]. A section titled "Umschau" [Review] containing essays on musical institutions and reviews starts in the fifth year (October 1925). In 1928 the editors of *Melos* initiated the section "Musikkritik" [Music criticism] as an attempt to write reviews collectively by committee consisting of Mersmann, Strobel, Hans Schultze-Ritter, Windsperger, Hermann Springer and Werner Wolfheim.³⁶ Two sections are added in May 1928, "Ausland" [Foreign countries] and "Rundfunk" [Radio], which features a "Rundfunkumschau" [Radio review] by Ernst Latzko. The section is enlarged in 1930 to "Rundfunk - Film - Schallplatte" [Radio, film and recordings], with articles by Strobel, Preußner and Warschauer.³⁷ More sections are added to the journal in 1930: "Ausschnitte" [Cutouts], featuring quotes from other journals, and "Diskussion," featuring responses from readers to articles in *Melos*, and contributions by readers in the form of articles on subjects such as "Musiksoziologie" [Music sociology] and "Neue Geistigkeit" [New spirituality].³⁸

³¹ Especially when compared to the journal *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (Vienna: Universal-Edition, 1919-37), in which many contributors were students of Schoenberg.

³² "Neue Musik," MEL 6, no. 2 (February 1927): 47-57.

³³ "Das Problem der neuen Musik," MEL 1, no. 5 (April 1920): 107-10.

³⁴ "Melodie oder Geräusch?" [Melody or noise], MEL 2, no. 5/6 (April 1921): 94-97; "Sphärenmusik" [Music of the spheres], MEL 3, no. 3 (June 1922): 132-33; "Melos und Rhythmus," MEL 3, no. 4/5 (August 1922): 186-88.

³⁵ The first supplement is the Lied "Es gilt fast mehr," with music by Eduard Erdmann to a text by Christian Morgenstern.

³⁶ Introduction of the concept in MEL 7, no. 1 (January 1928): 1-3.

³⁷ Announcement in MEL 8, no. 12 (December 1929): 537.

³⁸ Announcement in MEL 9, no. 5/6 (May/June 1930): 209. In a "Diskussion über Melos," prominent personalities in German musical life give their opinion on the direction the journal should take: MEL 11, no. 1 (January 1932): 2-11.

In the first year of *Melos*, the prominent music critic Oscar Bie and the composer Heinz Tiessen wrote regularly for the journal. Hanns Gutman wrote reviews and was in charge of notes on foreign journals, and Hans Warschauer wrote articles on radio or music recordings. Contributors to *Melos* also included the well-known composers and writers on music Hans Heinz Stuckenschmid and Egon Wellesz, as well as (in alphabetical order): musicologist and critic Fred Hamel; Karl Holl, the chair of the Verband Deutscher Musikkritiker [Society of German music critics]; music critic Heinz Joachim; music pedagogue Hugo Leichtentritt; Hans Joachim Moser, professor of musicology in Heidelberg (1925-27) and Berlin (1927-33); music theorist Edwin von der Nüll; Eberhard Preußner, publisher and general editor of the journal *Musikpflege*; musicologist Willi Schmid; pedagogue Marie-Therese Schmücker; Ernst Schoen, and film music composer Herbert Trantow.

Prominent musicians, pedagogues and writers throughout Europe wrote reviews and essays for the journal, including Erich Katz and Erich Doflein (both teachers at the Musikseminar in Freiburg im Breisgau), Oskar Guttman and Peter Epstein in Breslau, Erwin Kroll in Königsberg, Ernst Latzko in Leipzig, Willi Schmid in Munich, Karl Laux in Mannheim, Willi Reich in Vienna, Alexander Jemnitz in Budapest, Willi Schuh in Switzerland and Guido Gatti in Italy. In addition, Henry Cowell wrote a series of articles on American music.

The issues of 1920 and 1921 feature illustrations by Cesar Klein on the title and content pages. Starting with the third volume (November 1921), the title page contains illustrations related to historical performance practice (for example, a renaissance lute player or a band of ancient Egyptian musicians). From August 1924 the cover appears without illustrations. Photographs of musicians and illustrations accompanying articles are found sporadically throughout the journal.

In January 1931 the publisher Schott's Söhne began publishing an advertising pamphlet, *Der Weihergarten* [The pond garden] as a "Verlagsorgan" [Voice of the publisher]. Distributed with *Melos*,³⁹ it contained articles, reviews and advertisements about recent publications of music and books by Schott's Söhne. Another advertising pamphlet sporadically distributed with *Melos* was *Der golden Brunnen* [The golden well].⁴⁰ It dealt with Schott's Choral music publications.⁴¹ Both pamphlets are treated in the RIPM catalogue as they appeared in *Melos*.

³⁹ The publisher writes: The pamphlet "is to be a help in advertising, in a relaxed way, the publications of the publisher, more effectively than would be possible in the music journals related to us. We support their bipartisan position, which forbids us to use them as a voice of the publisher." In *Der Weihergarten* 1, no. 1 (January 1931): 1.

⁴⁰ The names of both journals were adapted from names of streets bordering the publishing house of Schott's Söhne in Mainz.

⁴¹ See "Warum dieses Blatt?" [Why this journal?] in *Der golden Brunnen* no. 1 (Spring 1933): 1.

The political takeover of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei [National Socialist Workers' Party] in 1933 resulted in the removal of Mersmann as general editor of *Melos*, without comment in the journal. Essays and notes in the miscellaneous sections indicate the influence the fascist party was, through centralization, exerting over Germany's cultural life, in the replacement of personnel in musical institutions and in the indoctrination of its political views in the media and musical life. The December 1933 issue features quotations by propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels on the nature of art and the aims of the Reichskulturkammer, the newly formed oversight committee for cultural life. While the tone of *Melos* becomes decidedly more cautious and less explorative in its discussions, there seems to have been some genuine excitement about the new government and its commitment to the arts.⁴² The early Nazi propaganda called for a reconnection of the people and art that might have sounded alluring to the contributors to *Melos*. The same propaganda would later be used by the Nazis as a tool to censor most of modern art as "entartete Kunst" [degenerate art]. An article on opera librettos by Kurt Zimmerreimer, who also wrote for the Reichsmusikkammer, is a good example of this early propaganda.⁴³

While the main articles are usually signed with the full names of the authors, reviews and shorter notes are often signed only with initials. The following sets of author initials and pseudonyms were identified.

A. J.	Alexander Jemnitz
E. v. d. N.	Edwin von der Nüll
H. G.	Hanns Gutman
H. H. S.	Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt
H. J.	Heinz Joachim
H. M.	Hans Mersmann
H. St., H. Str.	Heinrich Strobel
K. L.	Karl Laux
M.-Th. Sch.	Marie-Therese Schmücker
R. O.	Robert Oboussier
W. R.	Willi Reich
W. St.	Walter Steinhauer
W. W.	Walter Wiora

⁴² Karl Laux notes the presence of Hitler at the Bayreuther Festspiele in 1933 in a review in MEL 12, no. 8/9 (August/September 1933): 299-303. See also Bruno Werner, "Zur Kulturpolitik," in MEL 12, no. 4 (April 1933): 130-32; Walter Steinhauer, "Über das Nationale in der Musik," in MEL 12, no. 5/6 (May/June 1933): 173-77. See also quotations from other newspapers in the sections "Ausschnitte," MEL 12, no. 5/6 (May/June 1933): 192-94.

⁴³ "Stoff- und Textfragen der neuen Oper" [Questions on topic and text in opera], MEL 12, no. 5/6 (May/June 1933): 182-89.

This RIPM publication is based on a three-reel Library of Congress microfilm copy of *Melos*. The pamphlets *Der Weihergarten* and *Der golden Brunnen* that appear in this copy are collected at the end of each year but are catalogued following the issues of *Melos* to which they belong. The following pages are missing from the microfilm copy: MEL 1 (1920): 501-02 [index, probably part of issue no. 21, December 1920]; MEL 3, no. 3 (June 1922): 134-35; MEL 4, no. 2 (September 1924): 96; MEL 7, no. 3 (March 1928): 140-41; MEL 7, no. 4 (April 1928): 168-69; MEL 7, no. 5 (May 1928): Title page/cover; MEL 12, no. 1 (January 1933): 36-37. The University of Pittsburgh and the Minneapolis Public Library supplied photocopies of the missing pages.