

PAUL HINDEMITH'S *SEPTET* (1948): A LOOK BACK TO *NEUE SACHLICHKEIT*

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In the early 1920s, Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub created a fine arts movement that began in Weimar, Germany, which questioned artistic Expressionism. In 1923, he formed an art exhibition to display new art works of simplicity that were of his anti-Expressionist goal. This exhibition was termed *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or New Objectivity, and quickly became associated with all fine arts. Music of *Neue Sachlichkeit* ideals during the 1920s and 1930s began to exhibit anti-Expressionist concepts of form, neoclassicism and limited instrumentation. Paul Hindemith was among the leading figures of *Neue Sachlichkeit* music.

Although Paul Hindemith's *Septet* (1948) was composed during his later career, it shows many *Neue Sachlichkeit* traits found previously in the 1920s and 1930s. Characteristics of limited/mixed instrumentation, neoclassic instrumentation and form, and Baroque counterpoint are found in the *Septet*. These traits can also be heard in earlier *Neue Sachlichkeit* pieces by Hindemith such as *Hin und zurück, op. 45a* (1927), *Das Marienleben* (1922/23, rev. 1948) and *Neues vom Tage* (1929).

Chapter 2 examines the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement within the fine arts. Chapter 3 gives a brief biography of Paul Hindemith with a concentration on his influence of *Neue Sachlichkeit* music of the 1920s and 1930s. This chapter also relates this period of Hindemith's earlier career with his techniques used in later works, such as the *Septet*. Chapter 4 discusses how the *Septet* directly relates to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* fine arts movement. Chapter 5 gives a general analysis of the *Septet*. This

analysis provides the reader with an understanding of the forms and tonal relationships used in the *Septet*. This summarizes the neoclassicism of the *Septet* and shows traits of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Chapter 6 concludes with an examination of the mixed instrumentation of the *Septet*.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

At the end of World War I, Europe found itself in a period of great turmoil and change. In particular, Germany saw its identity quickly changed through loss of land, money and in a state of political duress. For the fine arts, this period began to abandon the Romantic Expressionism that was popular in the late nineteenth-century. Artists became interested in simpler concepts that were easily appreciated and recognized by the public. Many sought less Impressionistic, less atmospheric themes, which had been previously known only to the composers. Artistic interest grew toward simple and easily understood concepts made popular in previous artistic movements such as forms from the Baroque and Classical eras, popular show tunes, popular dance rhythms, and Classical tonal relationships. This recognition of past formal practices became known as the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (translated 'New Objectivity') movement, which quickly infiltrated the fine arts. In music, this translated into an avoidance of Wagnerian length and climax. Composers of this art movement returned to Baroque and Classical ideals of strict form within modern practices of tonality. For this reason, neoclassicism is often associated as a musical trait of *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

Composers within the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement of the 1920s and 1930s included Paul Hindemith, Igor Stravinsky and Kurt Weill. These German

composers wanted something Pan-European and objective rather than the subjective quality of Wagnerian Romanticism. For German composers of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, this meant clear forms, less dynamic contrasts, smaller ensembles, and anti-climactic themes.

Among the many composers involved in this fine arts movement, Hindemith became one of the leading musical figures of *Neue Sachlichkeit* music. Though Hindemith's music originally showed Wagnerian influences, in the early 1920s he abandoned this open tonal flow and large climactic works for strict linear counterpoint. This technique became known as neoclassicism and was a term that became associated with *Neue Sachlichkeit* music. With his change in compositional technique and use of neoclassicism, Hindemith became among the leading musical figures of *Neue Sachlichkeit* during the 1920s and 1930s, which paralleled the rise of the Nazi's in Germany.

The Nazi regime of the pre-World War II Germany came to abandon Hindemith's music in the 1930s. This abandonment caused him to look back to a pre-World War I Germany, which gained him fame and notoriety. The *Septet* (1948) falls within the post-World War II period of Hindemith's career. The *Septet* was composed for small chamber ensemble. It follows strict Classical forms and is in the overall form of a palindrome (perhaps the most anti-climactic, anti-Wagnerian musical form due to the lack of grandiose tension/release). The *Septet* can be directly related to the earlier *Neue Sachlichkeit* period of Paul Hindemith.



The purpose of this project is to examine the *Septet*. Comparisons will be made to additional pieces by other composers of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, but the focus will remain on the *Septet*. The project does not contain a fully detailed theoretical analysis of Hindemith's *Septet*, but rather the analysis given is used to justify the clear forms (sonata, theme and variations, fugue, and palindrome technique) of the *Septet*. These forms relate the piece to the neoclassicism of Hindemith and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

## CHAPTER 2

### NEUE SACHLICHKEIT

The term *Neue Sachlichkeit* was a post-World War I concept that was used within a fine arts movement of the 1920s and 1930s that opposed both the German government and the artistic movement known as Expressionism. This new German concept of artistic self-identity appeared in 1923 as the thematic title: *Neue Sachlichkeit: Deutsche Malerei seit dem Expressionismus* (*New Objectivity: German Painting since Expressionism*) given by Gustav Friedrich (G.F.) Hartlaub (1884-1963), then art historian and Director of the Mannheim Kunsthalle, to an art exhibition to be held in Weimar, Germany. Hartlaub stated:

...I am interested in bringing together representative works by those artists who over the last ten years have been neither Impressionistically vague nor Expressionistically abstract, either sensuously superficial nor constructivistically introverted. I want to show those artists who have remained – or who have once more become – avowedly faithful to positive, tangible reality.<sup>1</sup>

This idea was sent in letters to various artists in Germany who were asked to create artistic representations of Hartlaub's vision. The exhibition did not occur for two more years, finally culminating in the public introduction of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in 1925. Though highly controversial in its concept, *Neue Sachlichkeit* was proposed to create artistic works within this movement as a revolt against Expressionism (abstractness) with

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Hinton, "Aspects of Hindemith's *Neue Sachlichkeit*," *Hindemith-Jahrbuch* 14 (1985), 26.

characteristics that "...sought to de-emphasize artistic individuality [abstractness] and focus instead on objectivity."<sup>2</sup>

As with all new fine arts movements, this term was both praised for originality and met with apprehension. Many saw the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* as controversial and simply a vague title used to justify the period of art between World War I and the rise of the Nazi regime. An area that saw many anti-Expressionist revolutions was Weimar, Germany. Dennis Crockett states "The terms *Sachlichkeit* and *Neue Sachlichkeit* came to designate life in Weimar Germany – a new public attitude – during the period of relative economic and political stabilization following World War I."<sup>3</sup> Many consider *Neue Sachlichkeit* to be a general reflection of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s and 1930s. Others found the movement to be revolutionary because it was transferred to other fine arts such as literature, architecture and music.

The proponents of *Neue Sachlichkeit* allowed for exploration of post-Expressionism. The artists of Hartlaub's exhibition "...celebrated modern life but with an emotional detachment and lack of feeling in stark contrast to the perceived subjective excess of prewar Expressionism."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kristine Helene Kresge, "Paul Hindemith and Neue Sachlichkeit: Zeitoper in the Weimar Republic", (D.M.A. Dissertation, University of North Texas, 1992), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Dennis Crockett, *German Post-Expressionism: The Art of the Great Disorder* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1999), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Susan C. Cook, "George Antheil's Transatlantic: An American in the Weimar Republic", *The Journal of Musicology* 9, no. 4 (Autumn, 1991), 499-500.

*Neue Sachlichkeit*, translated 'New Objectivity,' became the platform of anti-Expressionism and anti-Abstractness.

Two major artistic trends emerged from the artists involved in Hartlaub's 1925 exhibition as branches of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The first trend "attacked and satirized the evils of society and those in power by demonstrating the horrors of World War I. These so-called 'Verists' included Otto Dix, George Grosz and Max Beckmann."<sup>5</sup> The second was the 'Magical Realists,' whose goal was to "counteract in a positive fashion the aggression and subjectivity of German Expressionist art."<sup>6</sup> These 'Magical Realists' included Heinrich Maria Davringhausen, Alexander Kanoldt and Georg Schrimpf. The 'Verists' "...chose subject matter of Weimar society, inflation, unemployment, and war" while the 'Magical Realists' gave "...no political comments" in their works.<sup>7</sup>

Out of these two groups that advocated the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement came several general characteristics of this art movement. *Neue Sachlichkeit* was popularized by "a new and intentional fidelity to the outlines of the objects."<sup>8</sup> They focused on "visual sobriety and acuity, an unsentimental, largely emotionless way of seeing, static pictorial structure,

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<sup>5</sup>[http://www.lilithgallery.com/arthistory/neuesachlichkeit/arthistory\\_neuesachlichkeit.html](http://www.lilithgallery.com/arthistory/neuesachlichkeit/arthistory_neuesachlichkeit.html); Internet; accessed 20 April, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Kresge, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 12.

often suggesting a positively airless, glassy space, and a general preference for the static over the dynamic.”<sup>9</sup>

This concept moved to literature, architecture and music through the practice of simplicity in visual and representative qualities. No longer did these artists complete works with mysterious meanings only known to them; rather their output was recognized for simplicity and could be understood by the general public.

#### *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Music

The term *Neue Sachlichkeit* and its concepts quickly infiltrated music and found popularity through the early-1930s when it began to dissipate with the rise of the Nazi regime. Heinrich Strobel (1898-1970), editor of the music journal ‘Melos’ from 1933-1934, promoted the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* as the “retreat from ideals of expressivity in post-Expressionist compositions and interpretation and for the neo-Baroque style of recent works...which were felt to be ‘realistic’ and ‘kinetic’”. The main criticism of Expressionism was that it was isolated from the public. *Neue Sachlichkeit* was defined by the musicians’ search for a larger basis

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 12.

of operation, and was characterized by the absence of complexity and by a familiarity in subject and means of expression.”<sup>10</sup>

This concept of musical simplicity and appeal to the public was achieved by incorporating elements of popular dance, jazz, musical quotations, and familiar Baroque and Classical techniques (in particular contrapuntal instrument layering) familiar to the listener. “The emphasis [of this music was] on the melodic and a striving for formal clarity.”<sup>11</sup> The “aim of *Neue Sachlichkeit* [was] mass reception, reversion to harmonic tonality and its structural simplification.”<sup>12</sup> One could speculate that the twelve-tone system devised by Arnold Schoenberg around the same time in Germany could classify as *Neue Sachlichkeit* because of its characteristics of simple harmonic hierarchy based on numeric matrix formulas. In fact, because of its theoretical complexity, many have identified Schoenberg’s system as an opposition to *Neue Sachlichkeit* ideals.

The most popular genres of this musical movement were musical drama (*Zeitopern*) and chamber music, which both became smaller and more compact as the appeal to the public became of greater importance. Ensembles diminished in size at this time for several reasons. Among

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<sup>10</sup> Nils Grosch, ed. Stanley Sadie, “Neue Sachlichkeit”, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 17, pp., 781-782.

<sup>11</sup> Franz Willms, “Paul Hindemith: Ein Versuch”, *Von Neuer Musik*, ed. H. Grues, E. Kruttge, and E. Thalheimer (Cologne: F.J. Marcam, 1925), 115-116.

<sup>12</sup> Grosch, 782.

these reasons were economic hardships in post-World War I Germany and the infiltration of American jazz and popular songs within Europe and the Weimar Republic. “One of the practical effects of this [decreasing size of instrumentation] was that the relatively small ensembles helped to pit the new idea of a reduced volume of sound against the dramatic impressive gestures of the giant late-Romantic orchestra [of Wagner and Strauss].”<sup>13</sup>

Out of this trend, musicians in Europe began to use smaller dramatic operas in a new tradition known as *Zeitoper*. The genre of *Zeitoper* can be defined as “...music theatre employing contemporary cultural references in music, politics, etc.”<sup>14</sup> Among composers of this period involved in the *Zeitoper* tradition were Ernst Toch (1887-1964), Max Brand (1896-1980), George Antheil (1900-1959), and Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951). Popular dramas under this category included *Jonny spielt auf* (Ernst Krenek - 1927), *Mohagonny Songspiel* (Kurt Weill - 1927) and *Hin und zuruck, op. 45a* (Paul Hindemith - 1927). *Zietoper* was dissolved with the rise of the Nazi regime in the 1930s due to political distaste.

The second musical genre popularized during the *Neue Sachlichkeit* period was chamber music. Marion Scott describes the rise in popularity: “Since the war [World War I], chamber music has become a

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<sup>13</sup> Kresge, 8-9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, iii.

cardinal point in the international creed. Very possibly this is a natural reaction against the mammoth music of the pre-war years..."<sup>15</sup> In continuing with the artistic revolt of Expressionism and the return to simplicity, composers began exploring the capacity of the chamber ensemble. No longer was this genre confined to string quartets and woodwind quintets of Classical and Romantic instrumentation. Composers sought capabilities of mixed ensembles of varying numbers and instrumentation.

Among the many composers involved in this quest were Stravinsky, Weill and Hindemith. One of Stravinsky's most popular works of this period was the *Octet for Wind Instruments* (1922-23, rev. 1952). The piece was composed for flute, two bassoons, clarinet, trumpet in C, trumpet in A, tenor trombone, and bass trombone. Kurt Weill's chamber music output within *Neue Sachlichkeit* ideals included the *Little Threepenny Music for Wind Orchestra* (assembled instrumental movements from *The Threepenny Opera* - 1928) written for small mixed wind ensemble. Perhaps the composer who was classified by most scholars as a pioneer for musical *Neue Sachlichkeit* was Paul Hindemith. Among his vast chamber music output during this period included the collection of eight pieces for small mixed chamber ensembles known as *Kammermusik* (1921-27) and the sonata project written for every major

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<sup>15</sup> Marion Scott, "Paul Hindemith: His Music and Its Characteristics," *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 56<sup>th</sup> session, (1929-1930), 94.



orchestral instrument. With the rise of popularity in the art movement *Neue Sachlichkeit* after G.F. Hartlaub's visionary exhibition in 1923 (1925 finality), every aspect of the fine arts was affected.

## CHAPTER 3

### PAUL HINDEMITH AND *NEUE SACHLICHKEIT*

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) was a composer, musician and conductor born in Hanau, Germany. As a young musician, Hindemith became interested in many instruments because of the sounds and timbres each produced. His main instrumental focus as a young boy was the violin. He would later become involved with all instrumental families, an accomplishment that would serve him in his career as violinist and violist, in his compositional projects for mixed chamber ensembles, and in his sonata project for most major orchestral instruments. Oliver Daniel stated that Hindemith was “one of the few composers to have mastered nearly all of the usual musical instruments in Western orchestras. He became one of the most complete musicians of our age.”<sup>16</sup> It was this intimate knowledge of music and instruments that enabled Hindemith to become one of the most influential composers of the twentieth-century.

Hindemith's formal musical training began at the Hoch Konservatorium at Frankfurt am Main where he studied violin with Adolf Rebner. He also trained in conducting and composition under the direction of Arnold Mendelssohn (a compositional conservative) and Bernard Sekles (a compositional progressive).<sup>17</sup> While studying at the conservatory, he supported himself financially by playing in

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<sup>16</sup> Oliver Daniel, “1895-Hindemith-1963”, *Musical America* 84 (Jan. 1963), 59.

<sup>17</sup> Rickey Gene Bogard, “The Trumpet in Selected Solo and Chamber Works of Paul Hindemith: Elements of Trumpet Technique and Their Relationship to the Gebrauchsmusik Concept”, (D.M.A. Dissertation, University of North Texas, 1994), 7.

dance bands and musical stage works; no doubt providing a foundation for his *Zeitopern* and chamber music compositions, popularized during the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement.

Hindemith eventually joined the Rebner String Quartet in 1914 as second violinist. With this group he gained performance experience, which led to becoming concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra in 1917. He would later become conductor of the Frankfurt Opera from 1923-1927. In 1921, Hindemith co-founded the Amar Quartet in which he served as principal violist.

Hindemith's compositional career was relatively unrecognized until 1922 when his music was performed at the International Society for Contemporary Music in Salzburg. He gained attention through performances of his music during the Salzburg festival to the point in which he began to organize the Donaueschingen Festival starting in 1923. The Donaueschingen Festival was formed to showcase new music by lesser-known composers. Here, Hindemith began to program and explore new 'avant garde' music of composers such as Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern. Hindemith's involvement in the Salzburg festival and the Donaueschingen Festival eventually led to a pedagogical career beginning at the Berliner Hochschule für Musik from 1927-1935. He later moved to the United States in 1940 and was employed by such American institutions as the University of Buffalo (1940), Cornell University (1940) and Yale University (1940-1946).

With the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany during the 1920s, Hindemith's career underwent a drastic change. His early compositional techniques of semi-tones and linear harmony were influenced by Wagner and Strauss and can be heard in the *String Quartet No. 2, Op. 16* (1919). In the 1920s he began to abandon these techniques for even older concepts of Baroque and Classical influences, which became known as neoclassicism and was exemplified by features of Classical form and counterpoint.<sup>18</sup> This change in Hindemith's compositional style paralleled the anti-Expressionist art movement known as *Neue Sachlichkeit*, of which Hindemith became a musical pioneer.

In the 1930s, Hindemith was publicly denounced by the Nazi regime as a "cultural Bolshevik,"<sup>19</sup> and his works were banished in Germany. Because of his wife's Jewish heritage and the social distaste for his music, Hindemith's fears of the Nazi's rose to the point that he migrated to Switzerland in 1938 and subsequently the United States in 1940, where he became a citizen in 1946. It was in the United States where Hindemith's music regained popularity and where he was to maintain a pedagogical career as professor at Yale University and as visiting lecturer at several other institutions. This period also paralleled the rise in popularity of his two-volume compositional text *The Craft of Musical Composition* (1937). In these books, Hindemith created a sequential method of his compositional and analytical technique, which was somewhat controversial in its equality of pitches within his own tonal hierarchy. This period also saw

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<sup>18</sup> Marion Scott, 96.

<sup>19</sup> *The New York Times*, December 29, 1963, sect. 1, p. 1.

Hindemith revisited many of his earlier works to include his new neoclassic concepts (i.e. *Das Marienleben* [1948] and the *Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet*, Op. 30 [1954]). Hindemith began to rework these pieces from his earlier compositional period of Wagnerian influence to emphasize his neoclassicism. In 1953, Hindemith returned to Europe to settle in Zurich, Switzerland. He remained in Europe until his sudden death in Frankfurt, Germany on 28 December 1963.

#### Hindemith – *Neue Sachlichkeit*

The rise of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in music was perhaps exemplified most in the works of Paul Hindemith. Hindemith and other composers of the 1920s and 1930s were involved in an examination of contemporary concepts within Classical and Baroque formal practices. Although this use of neoclassicism is often identified with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, most agree it is only a characteristic of the art movement in music. The *Neue Sachlichkeit* traits found in Hindemith's music are described by Stephen Hinton as:<sup>20</sup>

1. A general tendency towards a kind of musical constructivism [form]
2. The use of neoclassicism
3. The general use of contemporary cultural references
4. The turning away from music solely as the vehicle of expression for either the composer or the performer

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<sup>20</sup> Hinton, 35.

Of the many genre's for which Hindemith composed, these concepts are perhaps best seen in his *Zeitopern* (chamber opera): *Hin und zuruck*, op. 45a (1927) and *Neues vom Tage* (1929) as well as in the many other forms of chamber music.

In the early-1920s Hindemith abruptly turned away from the excesses of Wagnerian Romanticism. This change was expressed in the *Craft of Musical Composition* and by his return to baroque and classic formal practices. This sudden change was marked by heavier use of linear counterpoint as seen in *Kammermusik No. 1*, op. 24, no. 1 (1922), the *Sonata for Viola*, op. 25, no. 4 (1922) and *Das Marienleben*, op. 27 (1922-23). These works were founded on strict Classical forms such as sonata-allegro, theme and variations, and fugue.

One of the most Germanic musical forms is the fugue, which found popularity in the works of J.S. Bach, Dietrich Buxtehude and others. Following the opening fugato found in 'Von der Hochzeit zu Kana' of *Das Marienleben* (1922-23), Hindemith became associated with this musical form. The use of fugue is much different from the practices of Wagnerian Romanticism because of strict formal implications. Hindemith uses his personal harmonic hierarchy of tonal/key relationships, but remains bound to fugal concepts of form. Additional fugal music of Hindemith's *Neue Sachlichkeit* period includes the *Sonata for Viola*, op. 25, no. 4 (1922) and the fugue within the development of the first movement, Sonata-Allegro, of the *Sonata for Piano*, op. 17 (1920), which is

considered by some to be Hindemith's "earliest serious fugue."<sup>21</sup> Robert Sabin writes of the *Kleine Kammermusik*, op. 24, no. 2 that "Hindemith revives the contrapuntal mastery of the eighteenth-century but puts it into twentieth-century terms. Hindemith..., like Stravinsky in his *Octet*, thumbs his nose, by implication if not deliberately, at the cloudy impressionism and feeble sentimentality of the post-Wagnerians and post-Debussyans."<sup>22</sup>

An additional characteristic of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in music is the inclusion of popular music and use of dance rhythms. Hindemith was not adverse to this concept and uses this practice on several levels within his compositions. Among the works of Hindemith that include popular tunes are *Suite 1922*, op. 26 (1922), *Hin und zuruck*, op. 45a (1927), *Neues vom Tage* (1929) and *Kleine Kammermusik No. 1* (1922). *Suite 1922*, op. 26 (1922) was written as a satire of modern music. It includes a "clumsy" March (movement one), a 'Shimmy' fox-trot (movement two), a 'Boston' (movement four) and a 'Ragtime' (movement five).<sup>23</sup> The *Zeitopern* (chamber opera) *Hin und zuruck*, op. 45a (1927) includes a fox-trot rhythm found in the syncopated rhythms of mm. 13-22. (see Example 3A). An additional example of popular dance music is found in *Kleine Kammermusik No. 1* (1922) in the finale trumpet quotation of a contemporary fox-trot rhythm in

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<sup>21</sup> Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 402.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Sabin, "Chamber Music for Wind Instruments", *Musical America* 71, no.2 (Feb. 1951), 87.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.classicalarchives.com/work/180281.html#tvf=tracks&tv=about>; Internet; accessed 10 April, 2010.

G major.<sup>24</sup> Hindemith's inclusion of popular dance and song tunes was likely a result of his earlier performance experience in local dance bands.

Example 3A: *Hin und zuruck*, op. 45a (1927), mm. 13-22.<sup>25</sup>



Further formal implications of music within the period of *Neue Sachlichkeit* are the use of counter-Wagnerian forms such the musical palindrome, which musically moves in the same direction forward or backward. This compositional technique is perhaps the most anti-Expressionist, anti-climactic concept because of the lack of a musical apex and static tension/release. The use of the palindrome dates back to composers such as Franz Joseph Haydn (*Symphony No. 47 in G*) through many contemporaries such as Bela Bartok (*Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta: Adagio*). Hindemith uses this technique within works such as *Hin und Zuruck*, op. 45a (1927), *Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet*, op. 30 (1923, rev. 1954) and later in the *Septet* (1948).

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<sup>24</sup> Hinton, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Hindemith, *Hin und zuruck*, op. 45a (Mainz: B. Schott's Sohne, 1927).



It is the neoclassicism and identity of popular tunes used by Hindemith and other Germanic composers of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* period which epitomized the artistic abandonment of Expressionism. Hindemith's style changed in the early 1920s to become grounded in neoclassicism, a term and technique with which he would become associated. Perhaps it was the rise of the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s that forced Hindemith to idealize these earlier concepts in his later works. He continued to use neoclassic forms throughout his career and was no doubt looking back to a pre-World War II Germany in his reinstitution of neoclassicism in the *Septet*. Hindemith uses neoclassic forms of sonata-allegro, theme and variations, fugue, linear counterpoint, and the use of the palindrome within the *Septet* on several levels.

## CHAPTER 4

### PAUL HINDEMITH - *SEPTET*

Although the *Neue Sachlichkeit* fine arts movement was declared over by the 1940s, there are many examples of its reappearance in various forms in post-World War II compositions. There is little doubt that composers of this period such as Hindemith and Stravinsky looked back to earlier styles as they progressed throughout their compositional careers. Aspects of neoclassicism and earlier *Neue Sachlichkeit* objectives such as strict form, short movements and limited instrumentation show up in later compositions of these and many additional composers. Among the many works from the later stages of the careers of Hindemith and Stravinsky, perhaps the best examples of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the post-World War II era are Stravinsky's *Octet for Wind Instruments* (1923, rev. 1952) and Hindemith's *Septet* (1948).

Hindemith's *Septet* (1948) was written in November and December 1948 while he and his family were vacationing in Taormina, Sicily. This vacation was the culmination of a tour of his opera *Cardillac* (1926). Hindemith described the compositional process of the *Septet* as such:

In Taormina I wrote this piece in one of the most beautiful gardens you can possibly imagine, with the sea below and snow-capped Mt. Etna in the background. If one believes that the quality of a composition is influenced by the immediate environment, then one could expect to have only the best ideas in such a place.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> From Paul Hindemith Collection, Yale University.

Hindemith relieved stress from his previous opera tour by composing the *Septet* in a relaxed setting. He began composition of the five-movement *Septet* on November 22, 1948 and quickly completed it in the following order: third movement (November 29, 1948), first movement (November 30, 1948), second and fourth movements (December 1, 1948) and the fifth movement (December 7, 1948).<sup>27</sup>

The *Septet* instrumentation requires flute, oboe, clarinet (Bb), trumpet (Bb), horn (F), bass clarinet (Bb) and bassoon, the instrumentation of a traditional classical woodwind quintet with the addition of trumpet and bass clarinet.<sup>28</sup> The piece was premiered on December 30, 1948 by members of the Orchestra Sinfonica Stabile da Camera in Milan, Italy with Hindemith conducting.<sup>29</sup> It quickly gained popularity to the point where the New York Music Critics Circle named the *Septet* the most outstanding new chamber piece of 1952 following a concert performance in the New York Town Hall.<sup>30</sup>

The *Septet* clearly exhibits traits directly related to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* period. The five movements of the *Septet* are heavily grounded in neoclassicism. The first movement uses Hindemith's tonal language set forth in his text *Craft of Musical Composition*. This can be seen in the dominance of the

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<sup>27</sup> Giselher Schubert, trans. Richard Deveson, *Preface: Septet for Wind Instruments* (Mainz: B. Schott's Sohne, 1949), IV.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Walter Richey, "The Trumpet as used by Paul Hindemith in Three Instrumental Settings," (M.M. Thesis, University of North Texas, 1965), 27.

<sup>29</sup> Schubert, v.

<sup>30</sup> Bogard, 83.

interval of a fourth in each theme, a classic Hindemith trait. This interval always determines the tonal center for each theme. There is clear tonal transformation and organization but not in a classical progression of I-V-I. Hindemith's use of tonal progression will be described in Chapter 5.

The use of a tonal palindrome (Eb – F – Eb) centered around the pitch Eb is perhaps the biggest indication of later *Neue Sachlichkeit* concepts. The fact that the *Septet* progresses from Eb (movement one) to F (movement three) and back to Eb (movement five), along with the fact that the fourth movement is an exact retrograde of the second movement (see Chapter 5), shows a direct relation to earlier works of Hindemith's such as *Hin und zuruck, op. 45a* (1927), the *Sonata for Trombone and Piano* (1941) and even later in the *Quintet for Clarinet and Strings* (1954). Hindemith's use of the palindrome in *Hin und zuruck, op. 45a* (1927) is found in the fact that "The plot works forward to a point at which half the characters have been killed...and from there everything – action and music – works backward till the opera ends as it began..."<sup>31</sup> The *Septet* maintains this same quality in its tonal progression. Additional composers who employed palindromes include Franz Joseph Haydn (*Symphony No. 47 in G "the Palindrome"*), Igor Stravinsky (*The Owl and the Pussy Cat*) and Alban Berg (*Lulu*).

In his post-World War II compositional career, Hindemith seems to often look back to a period of neoclassicism, which found popularity during the *Neue*

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<sup>31</sup> Scott, 101.

*Sachlichkeit* period of the 1920s and 1930s. Many of these traits of clear tonal progression, small ensemble, smaller dynamics, and Classical and Baroque forms are found in Hindemith's later works, especially the *Septet*.

## CHAPTER 5

### SEPTET: FORMAL IMPLICATIONS OF NEOCLASSICISM

The term 'neoclassicism' is a controversial one that has taken on several definitions since it was first introduced in the late nineteenth-century. A summarization of the meaning of the term neoclassicism will be used given in *A History of Western Music* as "...a broad movement from the 1920s to the 1950s in which composers revived, imitated, or evoked the styles, genres, and forms of pre-Romantic music, especially of what we now call the Baroque and Classic periods."<sup>32</sup>

The open forms and cadential avoidances in enormously long works of composers such as Wagner, Strauss and Debussy were often met with apprehension by a public who did not understand Romantic concepts. For this reason, neoclassicism is often acknowledged as a parallel trait of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The composers of neoclassic ideals often reverted to classic forms such as sonata allegro and Baroque fugal concepts. For example, Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto* (1938) follows the form of a Vivaldi-Bach concerto grosso.<sup>33</sup> Further examples of strict Classical musical form include Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* (1918) and Hindemith's symphony *Mathis der Maler* (1934), and the *Septet* (1948).

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<sup>32</sup> Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 699.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 699.

Upon a general analysis of Hindemith's *Septet*, formal implications of neoclassicism directly relate this work to the earlier *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement. In the *Septet*, Hindemith uses Classical and Baroque forms of sonata allegro, theme and variations and fugue within a clear tonal progression. The technique of a musical palindrome is also used. The following is a general analysis used to justify the neoclassic nature of the *Septet* and to relate it to earlier concepts of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

#### Movement one – *Lebhaft* (sonata allegro)

The opening movement of the *Septet* is composed in a quasi-sonata allegro form based on three main themes. As with any classical sonata allegro form, Hindemith uses the template of an exposition, development and recapitulation. The exposition comprises mm. 1-81. The development-like section encompasses mm. 82-152 as the first and second themes are simultaneously developed. The term development-like is used as Hindemith avoids any form of the third theme in this section. The recapitulation can be seen in mm. 152-173, but only of the third thematic material. Finally, the movement finishes with a coda section in mm. 173-191, gathering fragments of all three subjects.

The initial subject (Theme 1) is stated by the clarinet in mm. 1-6 (see Example 5A). This theme continues with an enharmonic restatement by the flute and clarinet in mm. 12-17. Measures 6-12 and 17-23 continue the Eb tonal center and can be described as linking material. Theme 2 is introduced in mm.

27-36 (see Example 5B). Theme 2 continues with fragmentary statements made by the horn (mm. 36-40), oboe (mm. 40-45) and bass clarinet/bassoon (mm. 45-50). Theme 3 (see Example 5C) is introduced by the oboe (mm. 58-61) and re-stated by the bassoon (mm. 62-65). Hindemith utilizes fragments of the opening (head) of Theme 3 in the oboe (mm. 67-68) and the closing section (tail) used as sequential material from mm. 70-81 to finalize the third subject material.

Example 5A: *Septet* (1948), Movement One, Theme 1, mm. 1-6.<sup>34</sup>

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Example 5B: *Septet* (1948), Movement One, Theme 2, mm. 27-36.<sup>35</sup>

Oboe

<sup>34</sup> Paul Hindemith, *Septet* (Mainz: B. Schott's Sohne, 1949).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



Example 5C: *Septet* (1948), Movement One, Theme 3, mm. 58-61.<sup>36</sup>



The development section begins in m. 82 with the initial re-statement of Theme 2 in the trumpet. Throughout this section (mm. 82-152), Theme 3 fails to appear while material from Themes 1 and 2 are developed in truncated form. The development begins in the trumpet (Theme 2) and is juxtaposed with material from Theme 1 (oboe mm. 89-91) – See Example 5D. Further development occurs in mm. 91-107 as the trumpet performs an augmentation of Theme 2 while a stepwise sequence is found in the accompaniment leading to the fragmentary re-statement of Theme 1 in the oboe (mm. 96-98). The developmental material culminates in mm. 114-152 with a false recapitulation of Theme 1 (oboe mm. 124-137 and bass clarinet mm. 137-152).

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Example 5D: *Septet* (1948), Movement One, Development, mm. 82-91.<sup>37</sup>

The musical score for Example 5D shows four staves. The top staff is for Oboe, the second for Trumpet in B $\flat$ , the third for Oboe (Ob.), and the fourth for B $\flat$  Trumpet (B $\flat$  Tpt.). The key signature is two flats (B $\flat$  major or D $\flat$  minor) and the time signature is 2/4. The Oboe part consists of rests. The Trumpet in B $\flat$  part begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and plays a series of notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. The Oboe (Ob.) part begins at measure 7 with a trill. The B $\flat$  Trumpet (B $\flat$  Tpt.) part begins at measure 7 with a triplet of eighth notes.

Measure 152 begins with a full statement of Theme 3, which signifies the recapitulation. Hindemith deviates from classical sonata form by only using Theme 3 in the recapitulation. This restatement occurs in the muted trumpet (mm. 152-155) with a fragmentary echo by the oboe (mm. 157-158). The Theme 3 recapitulation returns to centralize on the opening tonal center of Eb. A coda appears in mm. 173-191 involving material from Theme 1 and finalizing the tonic centricity of Eb to close the movement.

### Movement two – *Intermezzo*

As was typical of a Classical intermezzo, Hindemith's second movement is a short, free-style movement in 2/4 meter following a semi-rounded binary form. The opening A section (mm. 1-11) begins with an enharmonic centric shift from

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Eb (Movement One) to D#. The clarinet begins the theme that continues through m. 11. Measures 11-19 encompass the *B* section with echoes made by the oboe, flute and clarinet. Measures 17-19 show Hindemith's use of triple versus duple rhythmic patterns. The movement culminates with a truncated *A'* in mm. 20-26 followed by a transfer to tonic center of E.

### Movement three - *Variationen* (theme and variations)

The form of the third movement is that of theme and variations. This movement is comprised of five thematic statements performing by solo trumpet (mm. 1-25), flute (mm. 25-50), oboe (mm. 50-76), horn (mm. 76-102) and bassoon (mm. 102-127).<sup>38</sup> Hindemith shows variation more in accompaniment than theme.

This movement begins with a thematic statement performed by the trumpet centered on the pitch concert F (mm. 1-25). The tonic force of F is justified by the importance of the interval of a perfect fourth. In his text, *Craft of Musical Composition*, Hindemith identifies the fourth among the strongest harmonic tonal forces (see Example 5E). This importance of the fourth is the Hindemith equivalent of a tonic → dominant interval relationship within classical practices. Upon completion of the opening thematic statement, the trumpet becomes an accompanimental instrument until the end of the movement. The flute resumes the subject material with a thematic re-statement, but with a tonal focus of concert E. The flute

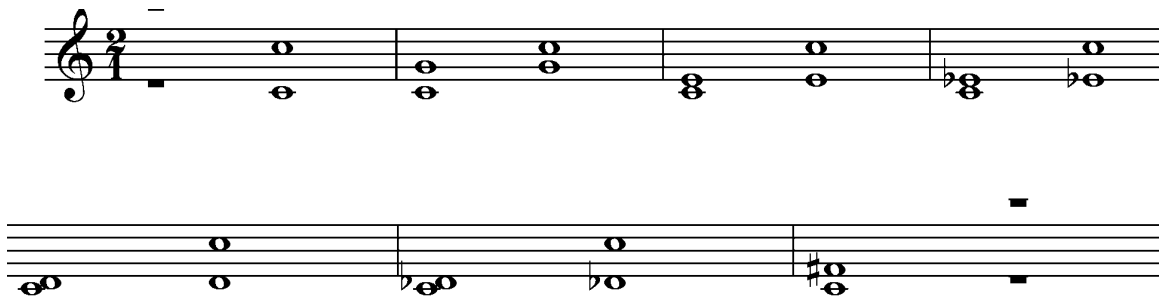
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<sup>38</sup> Schubert, viii.

moves to E through a chromatic modulation led by the trumpet in m. 25.

Hindemith also begins to show variation in articulations from the original trumpet statement to the current flute statement (see Example 5F a/b).

Example 5E: (Referenced from *Craft of Musical Composition*) Hindemith's Series 2: A ranking of interval classes from strongest to weakest in Harmonic Force.<sup>39</sup>



Example 5F (a): Movement Three, mm. 1-4 (Trumpet).<sup>40</sup>



Example 5F (b): Movement Three, mm. 25-29 (Flute).<sup>41</sup>



<sup>39</sup> J. Kent Williams, *Theories and Analyses of Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997), 217.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Hindemith, *Septet* (Mainz: B. Schott's Sohne, 1949).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Section 3 (mm. 50-76) is comprised of an oboe thematic variation based on the pitch A (a fourth higher than previous E). Again, the A tonal centrality is justified by the A → D opening interval of the fourth. This section is also varied by a metric shift in the thematic 3/4 designation opposed to the 9/8 meter of the accompaniment material. Section 4 (mm. 76-102) is an exact repetition of the melodic material of Section 3. Variations are seen in dynamic changes and instrumental variation while maintaining the duplet melody against triplet meter accompaniment.

The culminating Section 5 (mm. 102-127) begins with the bassoon statement of the Section 2 flute theme. The bassoon statement is the same varied articulated version of the original trumpet theme found in Section 2, but in F (not E as in the original Flute statement – Section 2) to correct the previous chromatic shift of Section 2. The trumpet returns to double the bassoon statement of the second portion of theme in Section 5 (mm. 116-127). This ultimately leads to a coda (mm. 128-132), which uses the opening section of the original thematic statement. The finality of the movement is once again centered in F.

#### Movement four – *Intermezzo*

As in the second movement, movement four is titled *Intermezzo*. This movement begins with an E centrality (just as the ending of the second movement) and is an exact retrograde of the previous *Intermezzo* (Movement two). This movement begins in E and finishes in Eb.

The use of a retrograde is a technique used by Hindemith in other works such as the *Sonata for Trombone and Piano* (1941), *Hin und zuruck, op. 45a* (1927) and the *Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet, Op. 30* (1923, rev. 1954). Colin Mason states of the Clarinet Quintet, “The last of the five movements [of the Clarinet Quintet] is an exact *cancrizans* [retrograde] of the first movement – a device that may have influenced Bartok in his use of inverted recapitulations...”<sup>42</sup> This use of retrograde is related to Hindemith’s use of the palindrome in the overall tonal form of the *Septet* (Eb-E-F-E-Eb)

#### Movement five – *Fuge*

The final movement of the *Septet* is a Triple Fugue (three small fugue’s) over which is performed the *Alter Berner Marsch (Old Bernese March)* played by the trumpet. The trumpet is further separated from the other instruments by a metric 2/2 indication as opposed to the ensemble’s 4/dotted-quarter note (performed as 12/8) meter of the fugal instruments.<sup>43</sup> The trumpet performs two entire statements of the *Old Bernese March* and is completely separated from the other instruments involved in the triple fugue.

The opening fugue begins with the clarinet statement of Fugue Subject 1 (mm. 1-7) centered on Eb (see Example 5G). The Eb centrality is confirmed through Hindemith’s use of concert Eb to concert Ab (perfect fourth) as the opening and the predominant interval of the motive. Similar to a typical

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<sup>42</sup> Colin Mason, “Some Aspects of Hindemith’s Chamber Music,” *Music and Letters* 41, no. 2 (April 1960), 153.

<sup>43</sup> Bogard, 87.

Baroque fugue, the clarinet makes this opening statement unaccompanied. The isolated trumpet march theme is performed simultaneously with this clarinet theme and is also centered around the interval of a perfect fourth (concert Bb→concert Eb) – See Example 5H.

Example 5G: *Septet* (1948), Movement Five, Fugue 1 Subject, mm. 1-7.<sup>44</sup>

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Example 5H: *Septet* (1948), Movement Five, Trumpet: *Alter Berner Marsch* Theme.

Trumpet in B $\flat$

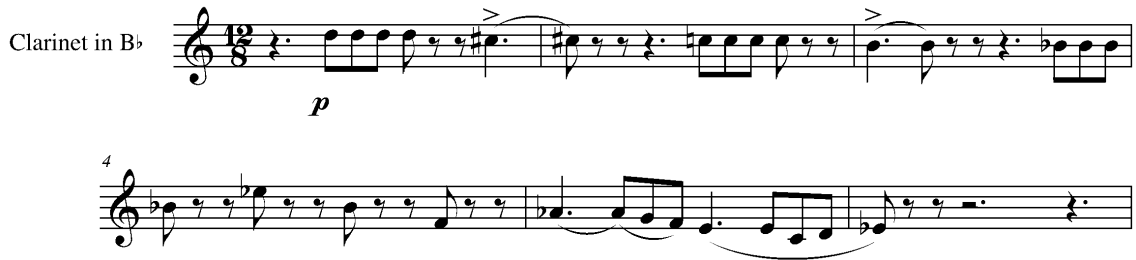
<sup>44</sup> Paul Hindemith, *Septet* (Mainz: B. Schott's Sohne, 1949).

Continuing Baroque fugal format, the flute follows with a real answer of Subject 1 transposed up a perfect fifth with a countersubject in the clarinet. The trumpet march theme remains opposed to the fugal concept in the clarinet and flute. Hindemith breaks the form of complete subject entrances of each instrument with a false entry by the bassoon in m. 11. He corrects this with a real answer performed by the bass clarinet and bassoon in mm. 16-22. The oboe also gives a false entry in m. 19. Measures 22-38 signify episodic elements with stretto entrances of the Fugue Subject 1 head in various keys and repeated false entries of truncated subject material by the clarinet (mm. 22-26), horn (mm. 26-27), oboe (mm. 28-30); culminating with a unison descending sequence in mm. 33-38.

A second fugue appears in mm. 38-73 with Subject 2. Subject 2 is a rhythmic theme stated first by the clarinet (mm. 38-43) in a typical baroque solo fugal statement (see Example 5I). The oboe proceeds with a tonal answer around the pitch A as the clarinet completes a countersubject. The second fugal subject (Subject 2) is never heard in its entirety as the bassoon follows in mm. 46-50 with an incomplete statement. This begins episodic material, which continues in mm. 52-60 with successive stretto false statements of Subject 2. Measures 61-73 link the second fugue to the following third fugal statement.



Example 5I: *Septet* (1948), Movement Five, Fugue 2 Subject, mm. 38-43.<sup>45</sup>



The final fugue idea is initially heard in the bassoon in mm. 73-75. This third subject (Subject 3) is reminiscent of the opening theme from the first movement and is stated the tonal center of E (see Example 5J). The clarinet states a real answer of Subject 3 transposed up a perfect fourth, but is metrically offset by two beats as the bassoon introduces the countersubject. The oboe (mm. 78-80) and flute (mm. 79-81) complete real answers of Subject 3 in stretto form. The first episode of the third fugue is seen in mm. 81-83. The following section (mm. 83-90) gives stretto entrances begun by the bassoon, which signifies an inversion of Subject 3. This inverted restatement is followed by an additional episode (mm. 90-93) which culminates in stretto entrances of Subject 3 and its inversion (mm. 93-103).

Example 5J: *Septet*, Movement Five, Fugue 3 Subject, mm. 73-75.<sup>46</sup>



<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Hindemith uses mm. 103-132 as an exchange of all three fugal subjects while the trumpet continues the *Old Bernese March* theme.<sup>47</sup> This movement concludes with mm. 133-145 in the form of a coda for all instruments except the trumpet, which finalizes the second and final march statement to conclude the tonal center of Eb; the cyclic equal to the opening movement (enharmonic D#).

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<sup>47</sup> Bogard, 88.

## CHAPTER 6

### INSTRUMENTATION AND *NEUE SACHLICHKEIT*

The *Septet*'s instrumentation of flute, oboe, clarinet (Bb), trumpet (Bb), horn (F), bass clarinet (Bb) and bassoon is of particular importance when considering the comparison of the work to the earlier *Neue Sachlichkeit* period. This seemingly mixed instrumentation directly relates to Hindemith's exploration of timbre in additional chamber ensemble works such as the *Octet* (1958) for clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, two violas, cello and double bass, the *Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet*, op. 30 (1923, rev. 1954), and *Drei Stucke fur 5 Instrumente* (1925) for clarinet (Bb), trumpet (C), violin, contrabass and piano. The mixed instrumentation of the *Septet* can also be directly related to the exploration of individual instrumental timbres of his sonata project in which Hindemith composed a sonata for each major orchestral instrument.

Hindemith's *Kammermusik* project of his *Neue Sachlichkeit* period also included exploration of new instrumental chamber combinations. *Kammermusik No. 1* (1921) and *Kleine Kammermusik* (1922) are of particular interest in relation to the *Septet*. *Kammermusik No. 1* (1921) was composed for an ensemble of twelve players, including an accordion and xylophone, while *Kleine Kammermusik* (1922) uses a classical woodwind quintet. The collections of *Kammermusik 2-7* are each in the form of concerti for individual instruments. *Kammermusik No. 6* (1927) is important in Hindemith's neoclassic concepts. This work is a concerto for viola d'amore and chamber orchestra. This use of a

Baroque instrument relatively unknown to modern string practices or players directly connects Hindemith to older styles of form and instrumentation.

When first considering the mixed instrumentation of the *Septet*, one may be lost as to Hindemith's choice of mixed woodwind and brass. Upon considering the scoring, Hindemith composed for a typical classical woodwind quintet with the addition of the trumpet and bass clarinet.<sup>48</sup> This implication of classical instrumentation can be directly related to Hindemith's neoclassicism. One may consider the addition of the trumpet directly related to the trumpet's soloistic performance of the traditional *Alter Berner Marsch* in the fifth movement. The bass clarinet may have been added as a lower voice to aid the bassoon and as a different tonal color.

An additional argument for relating the *Septet* to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement is this use of thin layering. The *Neue Sachlichkeit* period sought to minimize instrumentation. Composers wrote for smaller ensembles partly out of economic necessity due to a war-torn Germany, but also as a revolt against Expressionism and Wagnerian dynamics. These composers sought clearer formal boundaries that were tied to classical forms and smaller dynamics and were easily recognized by the listening audience.

The *Septet* falls directly into this period, and encompasses the qualities of *Neue Sachlichkeit* instrumentation. The small, mixed chamber ensemble of woodwind quintet domination displays modest dynamics. Even the trumpet

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<sup>48</sup> Richey, 27.

performs a limited dynamic range, utilizing a straight mute for timbre and dynamic limitation in the recapitulation of Theme 3 in the first movement.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Although the *Septet* by Paul Hindemith was written in 1948 almost twenty years after the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, there are several qualities that connect the piece to this art movement translated as “new objectivity.” Through his use of neoclassic forms and tonal hierarchy throughout the *Septet*, Hindemith established traits directly related to other *Neue Sachlichkeit* works from the 1920s and 1930s. In these works one finds limited instrumentation, reserved dynamics and neoclassic forms. The *Septet* also makes extensive use of the palindrome technique much as does Hindemith’s earlier work *Hin und zuruck, op. 45a* (1927).

Although the *Septet* was written somewhat later in Hindemith’s career, it exhibits many of the compositional values that he first exhibited at a younger age. These neoclassic characteristics are also clearly present in his *Symphony in Bb* (1951) and *Mathis der Maler* (1934). The impact of *Neue Sachlichkeit* was not reserved for only works of the 1920s and early 1930s, but rather it’s ideals extended into later compositional times as seen in Stravinsky’s *Octet for Wind Instruments* (1922-23, rev. 1952), *The Rake’s Progress* (1951) and Hindemith’s *Septet* (1948).

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