AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED WORKS OF FRANZ SCHMIDT ON THE CONCERTO FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA AND THE SONATA FOR TRUMPET AND PIANO BY KARL PILSS

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The *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* and the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* by Karl Pilss were written in 1934 and 1935, respectively. They are examples for solo trumpet of the late German Romantic style of melody, harmony, form and structure. Musicians and audience often overlook composer Karl Pilss outside his native Vienna. His ties to the Trompeterchor der Stadt Wien and the National Socialist Party during the years preceding the Second World War have limited widespread acceptance of this composer. Pilss’ output includes concertos for trumpet, horn, bass trombone, and piano, sonatas for trumpet, violin, and oboe, wind quintets and octets, piano pieces, choral works, and numerous large and small brass works.

Pilss’ teacher Franz Schmidt is more widely known. His four symphonies provide examples of post-Romanticism at the beginning of the twentieth century. His characteristic use of melody, harmony, form and structure is in the mold of Richard Strauss. Schmidt did not write any works for solo trumpet. However, his *Symphony No. 4* begins and ends with extended passages for solo trumpet. Pilss inherited and adopted many of Schmidt’s melodic, harmonic and formal traits. These can be clearly heard in his *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* and the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*.

This work discusses in detail the musical and compositional connection between Karl Pilss and his teacher, Franz Schmidt. Musical elements of melody, harmony, form and structure are used to illustrate the close connection between pupil and mentor. The use of the characteristic “Schmidt chord” in Pilss’ works cements the link between the two composers.
The *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* and the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* deserve wider acceptance on the basis of their musical merit and as unique examples of the late German Romantic style for solo trumpet.
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by

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Karl Pilss and his music have been largely overlooked by mainstream musical society. Whether by accident or design, few musicians and fewer audiences have heard his numerous compositions for brass. Yet he holds a special place in the brass world generally and in the trumpet world specifically where his Sonata for Trumpet and Piano and Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra stand as signposts marking the end of an era in trumpet music. They are the culmination of a long and illustrious tradition of music influenced by composers such as Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner and Franz Schmidt. Although none of these masters wrote solo trumpet sonatas or concerti, thanks to Karl Pilss, we have solo trumpet literature in that style. Pilss’ works for solo trumpet give musicians and audiences a rare opportunity to experience great music for solo trumpet in the late German Romantic style. These two works give trumpet players a chance to perform solo literature on par with the great Romantic works for violin and piano.

The rich chromatic harmonies and lush melodies of late German Romanticism can be heard in the compositional style of Pilss’ teacher, Franz Schmidt. Like Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, Schmidt’s musical output spans the post-Romantic transition from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. During this period of post-Romanticism many composers sought to unite Baroque contrapuntal techniques and Classic forms with new expressive means.¹ Their works remain true to the tenets of Romanticism in rhythm, expression, harmony, form and melody despite the cataclysmic changes occurring in the musical world of the early twentieth century. Schmidt stretched the boundaries of tonality and form but did not

seek to break them. His four symphonies represent the logical culmination of a symphonic
tradition begun decades earlier by Johannes Brahms and Anton Bruckner.

Unfortunately, the trumpet was not widely accepted as a fully chromatic solo instrument
during the lifetimes of Brahms, Bruckner or even Schmidt. Most of the high brass solo literature
of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries explored the chromatic potential of the newly
invented cornet a pistons rather than the tradition-bound trumpet. Fortunately Karl Pilss took up
the torch lit by his teacher Franz Schmidt and saw fit to compose a sonata and a concerto in the
late German Romantic style. These later German Romantic compositional characteristics are
exceptionally apparent in Pilss’ use of melody, form and structure and harmony. In his Sonata
for Trumpet and Piano and Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra trumpet players have the
opportunity to study original music from a genre that would be otherwise accessible only through
transcriptions.
CHAPTER 2

KARL PILSS AND FRANZ SCHMIDT

Information about composer Karl Pilss is surprisingly scarce even in German language publications. The *New Grove Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians* makes no mention of him in any edition even as far back as the original *Grove's Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians* published in 1904. He is not mentioned in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, the primary German language music encyclopedia. The most recent entry for Pilss in *Baker's Biographical Dictionary* is found in the fifth edition published in 1958. Of the German language sources used by Robert Suggs in his dissertation, only Erik Werba's *In Memorium* could be found. Albert Hiller's article "Karl Pilss (1902-1979)" which appeared in *Clarino* vol. 2 was inexplicably missing from its place on the shelf at the Library of Congress as recently as March 2005. Internet searches reveal only numerous duplications of the same few recordings.

The single most valuable source of information has been the dissertation *Karl Pilss: Late Romantic Heir to the Viennese Tradition of Trumpet and Brass Ensemble Music* by Robert Suggs. Dr. Suggs’ personal contacts with both Karl Pilss and his nephew Helmut shed light on the details of this little known composer’s life.

It is possible to speculate, as does Robert Suggs, about the reasons behind this dearth of information.² It is not, however due to a lack of a quality or quantity in Pilss’ musical output. It is hoped that this paper will help to spark a renewed interest in this often overlooked composer.

Biographical Information about Karl Pilss

Karl Pilss was born April 7, 1902 in Vienna and died there on June 22, 1979. His passing marked the end of a long line of Viennese Romantic composers that included Schubert, Brahms,

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Bruckner and Richard Strauss. Pilss’ works include concertos for trumpet, horn, bass trombone, and piano, sonatas for trumpet, violin, and oboe, wind quintets and octets, piano pieces, choral works, and numerous large and small brass works. Despite his output and the quality of his work he is little known outside his native land.

Pilss' first musical experiences came while he was a student at the Gymnasium in Vienna during the years 1918-1922. He studied music theory and composition with Karl Rebay. It was here in his formative years that he developed a friendship with Friedrich Grossmann that was to prove so beneficial in later years.

Following graduation from Gymnasium he attended the Hochschule für Musik (Music Academy) in Vienna where he was a composition student of Franz Schmidt. There he also studied conducting with Dirk Fock and Robert Heger, a leading conductor of the Vienna State Opera. After graduating from the Hochschule with honors he studied musicology at the University of Vienna with famed musicologist Guido Adler.

Pilss’ first important career opportunity came in 1930 when the then director of the Vienna State Opera, Clemens Krauss, selected Friedrich Grossmann to conduct its chorus. As Grossmann's friend, Pilss volunteered his talents as rehearsal pianist and assistant. His association with the Vienna State Opera formed a central part of his musical life for 38 years until his retirement in 1968. The Pilss legacy at the Vienna State Opera continued into the late 1980's when his nephew Helmut Pilss served as director of the Concert Association of the Vienna State Opera Chorus.

While still employed by the Vienna State Opera, Pilss became advisor and rehearsal director to the Salzburg Music Festival from 1934 until 1966. In this capacity he looked after such memorable conductors as Arturo Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Hans Knappertsbusch, Wilhelm...
Furtwangler, Karl Boehm and Herbert von Karajan. His position afforded him numerous professional contacts with some of the most important musicians of the twentieth century. According to Albert Hiller, the conductors held Pilss in high regard for his preparation of the singers. Furthermore, from the singers’ perspective he was indispensable as a solo coach.

In addition to his duties at the opera, Pilss was active as a teacher throughout his life, first at the Vienna Conservatory and later at the Vienna Academy where he was known internationally as an authority on opera, lieder and oratorio. His background as a vocal coach and lieder accompanist is apparent in the melodic lyricism of his compositions for solo trumpet.

Although the majority of his compositions for brass stem from his association with the Trompeterchor der Stadt Wien, his first large scale work for brass was the *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* written in 1934 and dedicated to Franz Dengler, then principal trumpet in the Vienna Philharmonic. His *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* followed the next year, written for Dengler's student Helmut Wobisch. The composition date of the *Sonata* is of particular significance as it predates Paul Hindemith's *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* by four years. The Hindemith *Sonata* is often considered to be the first trumpet sonata of the modern era. The close chronological proximity of these two works illustrates that Pilss’ *Sonata* represents the end of one musical tradition while Hindemith’s represents the beginning of the next.

The majority of Pilss' works for large brass ensemble were written for the Trompeterchor der Stadt Wien. His close association with that group began in 1934 and lasted throughout World War II. Concert programs from the years 1934-44 show that the majority of works performed by

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the Trompeterchor during that time period were written by Karl Pilss making him a "virtual house composer."\(^5\)

Despite the number of compositions he wrote for the Trompeterchor, Pilss was far from being the only composer commissioned to write for the ensemble. By 1942 over 100 pieces had been written specifically for the ensemble by various individuals. Most notable among these composers was Richard Strauss, a long time acquaintance of Pilss'. Before writing his *Festmusik der Stadt Wien* Strauss examined Pilss' scores to determine the scoring and instrumentation for the ensemble.\(^6\)

At the end of World War II, a large number of Pilss’ compositions were in print. By 1947 his compositional output had slowed dramatically as had the publication of his works. Publication of his music did not resume again until the 1970s when Robert King Music began to offer some of his works for brass ensemble. It is possible that his music was not popular because of his close ties to the Vienna Trompeterchor and by implication the Nazi party. It is undeniable that many of his works were composed specifically as ceremonial music for political functions. When Adolf Hitler entered Vienna in 1938 to the cheers of crowds he heard the music of Karl Pilss played by the Trompeterchor der Stadt Wien. Such perceived close ties are difficult for even the greatest of composers to break. Even now, musicians of the Viennese brass establishment are tight-lipped about the Nazi era and the music of Pilss.\(^7\)

Pilss continued his employment as principal vocal coach for the Vienna State Opera in the years following the end of World War II. He continued to compose but his Romantic style and harmonies, like those of Richard Strauss, belonged to an earlier era. Like Strauss he remained true to his heritage and continued to write in the late-Romantic style he inherited.

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\(^6\) Ibid., 14.
\(^7\) Suggs, Robert, Phone interview by author, March 2005.
Pilss composed a concerto for horn and another for bass trombone after his retirement from the opera in 1969. His final work for brass was the Capriccio for brass quintet written for the Annapolis brass quintet in 1978, just one year before his death.

In addition to his career as a composer, Karl Pilss was also an accomplished artist with over 100 drawings and 70 watercolors to his credit. In the spring of 1979, shortly before his death, he was honored with an art exhibition in Vienna. Like his music, his art reflects his dramatic and lyrical sense. Erik Werba writes in his In Memorium "he was one of those staunch artists in our country who account for the level of our music."

Biographical Information about Franz Schmidt

Franz Schmidt was born December 22, 1874 in Pressburg or Pozsony, now Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. With its close proximity to Budapest and Vienna, music in Bratislava flourished in the 18th century and was closely linked to Viennese musical life.

Both of Schmidt’s parents were musical and it was natural for the youngster to pursue music beginning with piano lessons at an early age. He studied organ and music theory with a Franciscan monk, Father Felizian Josef Moczik. Although Moczik was a painter, not a musician, he had a strong positive influence on Schmidt’s personal and artistic development. At the age of fourteen Schmidt moved to Vienna followed by his mother and sisters Maria and Emma. It was there he began studies at the Conservatory of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of Music Lovers) in 1890, where he studied music theory with Robert Fuchs and cello with Ferdinand Hellmesberger. He had enrolled in Anton Bruckner’s counterpoint class but was forced to study with Fuchs instead because of Bruckner’s absence and retirement due to illness.

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8 Werba, 629

He did not enjoy Fuchs’ lessons and preferred to study theory and counterpoint on his own. As a cello student, Hellmesberger considered him “not exactly talented, but really very diligent.”

His hard work led to a position in the cello section of the Vienna Court Opera Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. He later taught cello at the Conservatory of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreund, which in 1909 became the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst (Academy for Music and the Performing Arts).

Schmidt wrote his Symphony No. 1 in E Major during the years 1896-99 following his graduation from the Conservatory. He entered it in a competition held by the Philharmonic Society in Vienna and was unanimously awarded first prize. The symphony was premiered by the Konzertvereinsorchester (a precursor of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra) in January of 1902 with the composer conducting. The work received high praise from a variety of reviewers and was also performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. That same year, Schmidt’s daughter Emma and coincidentally Karl Pilss, were born.

Schmidt often performed as principal cellist with the Vienna Opera Orchestra under the baton of Gustav Mahler and at the maestro’s request. Although the two did not always agree, they held each other in mutual respect despite Mahler’s refusal to perform Schmidt’s first opera Notre Dame. Schmidt eventually resigned his position in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 1911 citing his excessive workload at the Conservatory of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Nevertheless, he maintained his membership in the Vienna Court Opera Orchestra until he received his professorship at the Academy in 1914.

Schmidt’s professional performing experience was on the cello. However, it was his musicianship at the piano that led to a professorship in piano and music theory at the

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Conservatory, now the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst. It is clear from his memoirs that Schmidt thought a move out of the orchestra and into academia necessary if he was to further his career as a serious composer.\textsuperscript{11} It was in this capacity that he directly influenced the young Karl Pilss.

Schmidt was held in high regard by his students at the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst.\textsuperscript{12} Those students, which included Karl Pilss, were not fed canned lessons in pure theory but rather challenged to create music in their composition assignments. Schmidt did not use a textbook, instead taught by example using the students’ own work to instruct the class. Although Schmidt did not encourage students to imitate his compositional style, clearly Karl Pilss was influenced by the older composer’s teaching and composition.

After divorcing his first wife, Schmidt remarried in 1923, just one year prior to Pilss’ first semester at the Akademie. His second wife, Margarethe, was one of his former students. They had maintained a relationship since at least 1915. Based on his correspondence, these were happy years for Schmidt.\textsuperscript{13}

Pilss began his composition studies in 1924, the same year Schmidt’s second opera \textit{Fredigundis} premiered in Vienna. The work had premiered in Berlin in 1922 but was not well received. Although Richard Strauss noted the quantity and quality of the music, the shortcomings in the libretto were too great for even Schmidt’s score to overcome.\textsuperscript{14} Subsequent performances were primarily in a concert version.

In 1925 Schmidt became the director of the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst where he had taught since 1901. Sadly, repeated illness forced his resignation in 1927. It is

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 37.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 54-55.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 58
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 68
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
reasonable to assume that the young Karl Pilss held his mentor in high esteem given his stature as composer, musician, teacher and administrator.

Pilss was a composition student at the Akademie for three years, 1924-27. These years were a time of great significance in the compositional life of Franz Schmidt. The period of time following Fredigundis marks a shift in his style as well as a return to instrumental music, primarily organ and string quartet. Schmidt was redefining his style, sorting and clarifying previous musical strands from earlier works. He composed several large scale organ works. These pieces marked a path of “harsh, grim expression.” In contrast, his First String Quartet and the first of his three Piano Quintets show “a man with a very sunny, warm nature.” The influence of the organ works and string chamber music is evident in the Third Symphony, begun in 1927. While symphonic in nature and conception, it retains the intimate, reflective character of chamber music. This same quality is apparent in the plaintive simplicity found in passages of the slow movements of Pilss’ Sonata for Trumpet and Concerto for Trumpet.

Schmidt’s Symphony No. 3 in A Major was begun during Karl Pilss’ final year of composition studies. It was Schmidt’s favorite among his symphonies. He entered the work into a competition set up by the Columbia Gramophone Company to commemorate the centenary of the death of Franz Schubert. Although it was originally established for the best completion of Schubert’s Symphony No 8 in B Minor “Unfinished”, the competition was later altered to recognize the best new work written in the spirit of Schubert. Schmidt was awarded the national prize for Austria, but Swedish composer Kurt Atterberg received the top prize. Despite

15 Truscott, 88.
16 Ibid.
17 Truscott, 89.
18 Tschulik, 78.
the judges’ opinions, Schmidt’s symphony garnered critical acclaim and was thought by some to be the more profound work of the two.\textsuperscript{19}

Franz Schmidt’s later years were marked by a series of health problems. In July of 1935 he suffered a serious heart attack, narrowly escaping death. The tragic death of his daughter may have been the impetus needed to further his creation of spiritual music. His oratorio \textit{Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln}, written during this time, is an intensely dramatic portrayal of the Apocalypse. Although Schmidt also suffered from cirrhosis of the liver and diabetes, it was a heart attack on February 11, 1937 that brought an end to his life. His final work, left unfinished, was a Germanic cantata titled \textit{Deutsche Auferstehung} (The Resurrection of Germany). It was completed by Robert Wagner and first performed April 24, 1940. It was not well received by National Socialist party officials despite its obvious message. Schmidt was obviously not well suited to give musical voice to the party’s political ideology.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} Truscott, 92.
\textsuperscript{20} Tschulik, 122
CHAPTER 3
WORKS FOR SOLO TRUMPET BY KARL PILSS

Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra

The Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra by Karl Pilss is in three movements, arranged in a traditional fast - slow - fast pattern; I. Allegro moderato, II. Largo - Allegretto scherzando and III. Allegro. The duration of 25 minutes is long for a trumpet concerto, which is usually 12 to 20 minutes in length. However, the length is not surprising given the time period it was written and the style in which it was composed. Most orchestral works by late Romantic composers such as Strauss, Mahler, Bruckner and Franz Schmidt are all larger than the majority of works in the orchestral repertoire both in their duration and in the forces needed for performance. Pilss was accustomed to hearing lengthy works. Growing up and working in Vienna, Pilss was familiar with the large symphonies of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner. The average length of a symphony by his composition teacher Franz Schmidt was 43 minutes.

Written in 1934, the Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra is dedicated to Franz Dengler, then principal trumpet in the Vienna Philharmonic. It was originally published by Universal Editions in 1936 and later by Robert King Music Company in 1973. A piano reduction by the composer is available for purchase from Robert King Music. The full set of orchestra parts is currently incomplete. The full score is missing and the set of parts is in poor repair and is missing the viola, clarinet 1, clarinet 2 and horn 4 parts.\(^{21}\) Fortunately the piano reduction provides numerous indications as to the orchestration.

The Concerto stands as one of only a few works in the style of the grand Romantic concerto written for trumpet. It is certainly unlike other contemporary concertos such as Ernest

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\(^{21}\) Maxwell, Ann, librarian at Robert King Music Co. Phone interview by author, March 2005.
Williams' *Concerto No. 1* written in 1936 or Harry James' *Concerto for Trumpet* from 1940. Pilss' *Concerto for Trumpet* is more akin to the Romantic instrumental piano and violin concertos of Tchaikovsky or Grieg.

Since the 1930's, the trumpet section of the Vienna Philharmonic has traditionally performed on rotary valve B-flat and C trumpets. This instrument has much to do with the distinctive sound of the brass section. At the time the Heckle rotary trumpet was the instrument of choice. It was capable of a tone with a "golden clarity unmatched by any other B flat trumpet." Its construction and materials contribute to the legendary singing sound and effortless legato. As principal trumpet in the Vienna Philharmonic Franz Dengler not only embodied that lyrical style but also conveyed it to his famous students, soloists Helmut Wobisch and Adolf Scherbaum. While the rotary trumpet possesses a beautiful sound, it is not capable of the volume, brilliance and power of modern piston valve instruments. When Karl Pilss dedicated the *Concerto* to Dengler he must have had that singing sound and effortless legato style in mind as opposed to the power and brilliance of a modern instrument.

The *Concerto* is a Grade V piece with a range of g to d-flat". The greatest challenges for performers lie in the areas of style and endurance. Any potential ranges difficulties can be handled with some discreet octave adjustments at the end of the final movement. While there are some technical passages, particularly in the first movement and second movements, none of these place excessive demands on either the soloist or the orchestra.

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The piano reduction requires a competent pianist capable of further condensing the piano score to highlight important orchestral lines that might otherwise be overlooked as a result of the note density inherent in piano reductions of full orchestral scores. The soloist and accompanist should consult the score prior to beginning rehearsals in order to fully realize the potential of this powerful piece.

If the *Concerto* is to be performed with the piano reduction instead of the full orchestra score, both soloist and pianist must be sensitive to balance issues. A prime example of this potential problem occurs in the first movement at measure 125 during the retransition. The active nature of the solo voice tends to obscure the more important details of the return of theme b in diminution layered over an inversion of the same theme. A similar situation occurs at measure 160 in the same movement. Careful attention to balance details in places like these yields a more satisfying and informed performance for audience and players alike.

Stylistically, the *Concerto* requires a mature performer with a thorough knowledge of orchestral styles. In particular, the lyrical passages of the second and third movements demand attention to phrase shape and pacing. Even the technical passages of the first and second movements must be played in a lyrical and flowing manner in keeping with the Viennese tradition. There are no displays of technical prowess purely for the sake of virtuosity. The performers must always be mindful of Pilss’ background as a vocal coach and pianist and must not let technique or lack thereof impinge upon the musical line.

Most of the complexity in Pilss' writing comes from his use of chromatic harmonies. He seems to have been relatively unaffected by changes occurring rhythmically in other parts of the musical world. The majority of the *Concerto* is rhythmically uncomplicated. However, some complex passages demand special attention to rhythmic detail. In one instance, the soloist is
asked to alternate between dotted rhythms and triplets. If the performer is not attentive, it is easy to allow the triplet rhythm to degrade the rhythmic integrity of the dotted rhythms. With accurate subdivision, the rhythm retains a light, lilting quality that could potentially be lost.

*Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*

Like the *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* by Karl Pilss is also in three movements, arranged in a traditional fast - slow - fast pattern; I. Allegro appassionato, II. Adagio, molto cantabile, and III. Allegro agitato. It lasts approximately sixteen minutes. In comparison, the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* by Paul Hindemith lasts approximately seventeen minutes. Pilss’ *Sonata* has a range of c’ to b-flat” on B-flat trumpet and was written in 1935, only one year after the *Concerto*. It was dedicated to Professor Helmut Wobisch, a student of Franz Dengler’s. Wobisch was also principal trumpet in the Vienna Philharmonic and made the first long playing recording of the Haydn trumpet concerto in 1952.\(^\text{25}\)

Although written in close chronological proximity, the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* shows a greater compositional maturity than the *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*. The melodic lines flow better and seem more logically conceived. The harmonies, while still chromatic, are pleasant. The structure is tighter, due in part to the shorter length, but also perhaps to the instrumentation. Pilss also seems more comfortable with the trumpet as a solo instrument after writing the *Concerto*. However, the two works have much in common and are obviously the products of one train of thought.

The *Sonata* begins with a heraldic theme stated first in the piano and then answered by the trumpet. It is based on the intervals of thirds and fourths. The opening theme in g minor is different in mood than the opening theme of the *Concerto* (in B-flat major) but both contain fanfare motifs and intervallic elements related to the opening and closing trumpet solos in

\(^{25}\) Tarr, 180
Schmidt’s *Fourth Symphony*. After the initial burst of energy, the principal theme soars lyrically until an agitated transition introduced by the piano gives way to the calm second theme beginning in m. 50. Like the second theme in the *Concerto*, this second theme has lyric quality but retains the rhythmic activity and vitality of the opening theme. The piano plays an equal role in the development with frequent contrapuntal passages set against the trumpet. The development is also marked by frequent melodic shifts between the first, second and transition themes. Unsettled harmonies contribute to the general tension of the development. A transition to the second theme gives the impression of a recapitulation before the brief coda and abrupt conclusion.

The second movement, marked Adagio, molto cantabile, begins with a plain pulsating rhythm in the piano part which sets the stage for the simple first theme in the trumpet. The opening trumpet melody is lush without becoming maudlin. The sixteenth note accompaniment is in contrast to the contrapuntal nature of the melodic line in the piano part which belies the straightforward simplicity of the trumpet melody. The interplay between piano and trumpet continues, illustrating the democratic nature of the two parts. The heroic second theme is first introduced by the piano in the tonic key of E-flat before modulating to G major, the mediant, for the trumpet entrance. The stately second theme is rhythmically active in sharp contrast to the first theme. The transition back to the opening theme uses elements of both themes simultaneously to blend the two smoothly together. Following the return of the opening theme a short coda contains elements of both themes together before resolving in a final tonic triad.

The final movement, Allegro agitato, opens suddenly and dramatically in G-minor, the key of the first movement. The overall key structure of the three movements reveals a motion from tonic (G-minor) to submediant (E-flat major) and back to tonic (G-minor), the mediant of
the second movement. The first three notes of the trumpet theme are the same as the first three notes of the first movement which serves to enforce the thematic integrity of the Sonata. The same intervallic pattern opens the second movement but in inversion. The rapid sextuplets in the piano give the trumpet theme vigorous energy. The opening theme is heard in both G-minor and in B-flat major, the mediant, before a startling shift to the submediant of E-flat major which proves to eventually be the dominant of A-flat major, the key of the next section. What follows is a fugal transition of surprising lightness sandwiched between statements of the principal theme. The recapitulation is followed by a coda in which Pilss brings back elements of both preceding movements in juxtaposition. The work ends as suddenly and dramatically as the first movement but in G major as opposed to G-minor.

An historically informed performance of either the Sonata or the Concerto should be done on a rotary valved B-flat trumpet. The Viennese tradition of using rotary trumpets began with Dengler in the 1930’s although earlier trumpet sections of the Vienna Philharmonic used French Besson C trumpet with piston valves.\(^{26}\) Considering the time and place the Concerto was written it is safe to assume that Dengler would have performed the Concerto on a B-flat rotary valve trumpet. His student Wobisch would have undoubtedly done the same when playing the Sonata. This instrument assists the performer in producing the round soft tone for which Dengler was famous. The rotary valve instrument also lends itself to producing the smooth melodic lines characteristic of both Dengler and the Viennese style.\(^{27}\) If a rotary B-flat trumpet is not available, the present-day performer should still be cognizant of that unique sound when playing on a modern instrument and should avoid excessively bright or brilliant playing. The ideal sound should be round and full, not piercing or shrill.

\(^{26}\) Tarr, 171

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 180
In addition, Pilss' background as a pianist and vocal coach must be a leading factor in choosing a lyrical style for the performance. Both pieces need to have an effortless quality, not one of forced excitement.
CHAPTER 4
SYMPHONIES NO. 1 - 4 BY FRANZ SCHMIDT

Symphony No. 1 in E Major

Franz Schmidt’s Symphony No. 1 in E Major was completed in 1899. The symphony was unanimously awarded first prize by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde of Vienna and received its premiere on January 25, 1902 conducted by Schmidt. It also received high praise from numerous critics. It was performed later that same year by the Vienna Philharmonic and again received rave reviews. Although quite different from his other symphonies, it contains elements that characterize his mature symphonic style.

The work has strong Baroque tendencies. Schmidt had an interest in the music of the Baroque as did other post-Romantic composers, most notably Ferrucio Busoni and Max Reger. The first movement begins with the dotted rhythms characteristic of a French overture. In this early work Schmidt already showed an affinity for solo trumpet by featuring it in a lyrical passage to close the stately introduction of the first movement. A similar theme appears later in the movement as the beginning of a rich horn fanfare theme. The closing third of the movement is characteristic of Schmidt’s later symphonic writing in its long, lyric melodies supported by rhythmic vitality in the harmony.

The second movement displays Schmidt’s early foundations in harmony. The movement begins in E-flat major although the key signature is four flats. He moves through the keys of F major, A-flat minor and finally into E Major, basing the third of the new key on the tonic of the written key signature. Third relationships figure prominently both harmonically and melodically in his later works. As expected, the movement finally resolves in A-flat major, the key of the written key signature.

28 Longyear, Nineteenth Century Romanticism in Music, 185
The third movement is a scherzo. Schmidt favored scherzi and this one, like others, has the character of an Austrian Ländler. The dance-like tempo and melody are enhanced by the rocking motion of the string accompaniment. Schmidt’s Hungarian roots are obvious in the shakes and chromaticism. These figures are also typical of some of his later symphonic writing. Harold Truscott feels this movement comes closest to his mature writing.

Like the first, the fourth movement reflects Schmidt’s interest in the Baroque style. The movement is highly contrapuntal but not primarily fugal (although in his later works he writes complete fugues, showing a command of a variety of compositional forms). The intricate melodic lines in steady eighth notes create a tightly woven contrapuntal texture giving the movement the overall feel of a Baroque concerto grosso. Another feature reflecting the influence of the Baroque is his use of a steady harmonic rhythm with clear cadences. Schmidt’s strong interest in the organ music of J.S. Bach is apparent in the chorale prelude quality of the second theme where Schmidt treats the orchestra like an organ. A majestic brass chorale clearly shows the influence of not only Bach but also the Viennese tradition of Johannes Brahms with a passage remarkably similar in character to Brahms’ Academic Festival Overture. The movement closes with a resounding authentic cadence.

*Symphony No. 2 in E-flat Major*

*Symphony No. 2 in E-flat Major* (1911-13) marks Schmidt’s return to symphonic writing after a long gap. During the intervening years between his first and second symphonies he was occupied with the composition of his first opera Notre Dame. In addition he was still active as a cellist in the Vienna Philharmonic and was busy with his academic duties at the Conservatory of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. His beloved daughter Emma was born in 1902 and he was

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29 Truscott, 138.
30 Ibid., 48.
surely involved in parenting as well. Stress from conflicts in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra between Schmidt, Gustav Mahler and Arnold Rosé no doubt contributed to the gap between his first and second symphonies.

The passage of time and lessons learned through the composition of *Notre Dame* were also a factor in Schmidt’s musical growth between the first two symphonies. The orchestra for the *Second Symphony* is considerably larger than that of his *First Symphony*. Like the *First Symphony*, the introduction to the first movement of the *Second Symphony* reveals some of Schmidt’s Baroque stylistic influences but in a different way. It still has intricate moving lines and dotted rhythms, but unlike the *First Symphony* it does not have the feel of a French overture. This is due in large part to the tempo and to the lyricism of the melodic lines.

Schmidt’s *Symphony No. 2 in E-flat Major* received its premiere in 1913 and was greeted with positive reviews. It was performed again the following year by the Vienna Philharmonic and has been programmed by that and other orchestras numerous times since. Some critics have called it “academic and pretentious” while others view it with enthusiasm.31 Regardless of which view is accepted, its atypical form is undeniable.

The form is unusual even for the Romantic period. The first movement is close to sonata form in the classical sense but the second movement is an Allegretto con variazioni. There are ten variations, each with a unique character. The final movement begins with a slow introduction followed by a contrapuntal section whose wind subject can be found in the theme of the previous movement. Other elements of preceding variations can be heard in the final movement as well. The finale has a unifying effect on the work as a whole. One writer has suggested that it serves as

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31 Tschulik, 39.
a “large-scale coda crowning the Prelude and the Theme and Variations.” Elements of the work illustrate the continued growth in Schmidt’s compositional style and point the way toward the artistic and musical pinnacle of his *Symphony No. 4*.

*Symphony No. 3 in A Major*

Fifteen years passed between the premiere of Schmidt’s *Symphony No. 2* and completion of his *Symphony No. 3*. It was not until 1928 that the completed *Third Symphony* won the Austrian division of the Columbia Gramophone Company’s competition celebrating the centenary of Schubert’s death. The years between the two symphonies brought both triumph and tragedy in his professional and personal life. He completed his second opera *Fredigundis*, divorced and remarried, was appointed director of the State Academy of Music and the Dramatic Arts (formerly the Conservatory of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde) but was forced to resign due to poor health. Despite the upheavals, the years between the two symphonies were the most productive period of his career as a composer. During this time he produced not only *Fredigundis* but also numerous string chamber works, organ works and a concerto for piano and orchestra. Compositionally, the organ works had perhaps the most influence on the *Third Symphony*. However, the mood of the symphony is very personal, almost like chamber music. There is a distinct division between the composer who wrote the *First and Second Symphonies* and the composer who wrote the *Third and Fourth Symphonies*. Harold Truscott suggests that the pivotal composition in the intervening fourteen years may be a short piano work, *Romanze* written at the request of Molly Sephton, wife of his close friend Geoffrey. Although the piece was not well received by Molly, it is significant because it shows a reflective side of Schmidt that had gone previously unnoticed. The same introspective style is found later in his string chamber works and eventually in the *Third Symphony*.

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32 Ibid., 42.
The symphony was premiered by the Vienna Philharmonic December 2, 1928. The first movement begins lyrically in the woodwinds creating a pastoral mood as the strings enter. This aura of serenity continues throughout the exposition and into the development. In the development, Schmidt takes the opportunity to create tension through contrapuntal lines in the strings before returning to the pastoral mood of the beginning in the recapitulation. A coda concludes the movement as peacefully as it began in spite of the chromatic complexity of the interwoven melodic lines. The final measures end somewhat abruptly but with a prominent statement of the melody in the trumpet parts. The movement is characteristic of Schmidt’s mature style in its display of lyricism with active inner parts.

The dissonance of the second movement comes as a shock after the lyrical outpouring of the first movement. It is not bitonal but is “the most far-reaching example of Schmidt’s individual diatonic chromaticism.”33 Structurally the second movement is a loose theme and variations, similar to the second movement of the Second Symphony. However, the harmony and mood are very different from the earlier work. In the Second Symphony Schmidt’s theme was light and classical in nature. In the Third Symphony the movement is dark and brooding, full of augmented triads and wandering chromatic dissonances. The shadowy gloom lifts only on the final D major chord.

As with his First Symphony, Schmidt favors the Austrian Ländler for the dance-like Scherzo. In this instance, it is a welcome relief after the heaviness of the second movement. The Trio, marked Molto più tranquillo, has a gentle swaying quality before the da capo with its dotted rhythms.

The fourth movement starts with a stately introduction that rises and falls before coming to rest on an E major chord, the dominant of the tonic key of A. Although the symphony is

33 Truscott, 103.
predominantly in A major, the finale begins here in A minor. It is marked Allegro vivace and is in $6_8$ meter. Schmidt presents six different themes in this movement in a sonata rondo form. The most striking feature of this final movement is that the majority of the movement is in A minor while the bulk of the symphony is in A major. This is rare although the reversal is not unusual. The movement concludes dramatically in A major.

Symphony No. 4 in C Major

The Fourth Symphony is the pinnacle of Schmidt’s symphonic writing. Written in 1932-33, it is a requiem for Schmidt’s daughter Emma who died in childbirth in 1932. The premiere took place on January 10, 1934.

The symphony is a blending of a four movement symphonic form in one large-scale, continuous movement. Seen in its entirety, it is a sonata form. The first movement functions as the exposition while the finale serves as a recapitulation. The Adagio and Scherzo are the development. At the beginning the unaccompanied solo trumpet states the critical principal theme of the entire work. Schmidt felt that this music played by the solo trumpet represented the “last music taken into the hereafter, after one has been born under its auspices and has lived one’s life.” When the same theme, still played by solo trumpet, is repeated at the conclusion of the entire symphony it represents “death surrounded by beauty in the course of which one’s whole life passes through the mind.” The tonal center of the symphony is not readily apparent in the mysterious, highly chromatic principal theme, however the theme is as much harmonic as it is melodic. Schmidt felt the work was his most genuine and most intimate. It is also autobiographical in nature, featuring cello and trumpet as the two solo instruments. Schmidt’s

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34 Ibid., 118.
35 Tschulik, 98.
36 Tschulik, 98.
37 Corfield. 163.
instrument was the cello while the trumpet evoked happy memories of his youth in Perchtoldsdorf where he both played and enjoyed listening to the trumpet.\footnote{38}{Ibid.}

The Adagio is the musical climax of the work. It dominates the symphony thematically and in mood.\footnote{39}{Tschulik, 101.} Following the premiere, music critic Max Springer wrote “In this work Schmidt sings a song of melancholy, of renunciation, of anguish and grief-stricken love.”\footnote{40}{Ibid.} The poignant melody played by the solo cello is a tender outpouring of love and loss by the grieving Schmidt. The funereal drums which follow set a somber tone for the second theme of the Adagio. The music is dark and tragic. The listener can almost hear Schmidt crying with grief over the loss of his daughter. When the opening theme of the Adagio returns it reveals a renewed sense of hope after the overwhelming pathos of the central section of the Adagio. The return of the solo cello brings an uneasy peace before the Scherzo.

While Schmidt’s scherzi often imitate the dance mood of the \textit{Ländler}, here he avoids that tendency in keeping with the elegiac nature of the work. The Scherzo is contrapuntal but not a fugue. Early in the movement the theme from the first movement is heard in the upper woodwinds in conjunction with the scherzo theme. This combination of material from both movements occurs throughout the movement as the scherzo theme appears in various guises. The movement reaches a climax near the end with an explosion of sound that gradually dies away and sinks ever lower in dynamics and pitch to the beginning of the fourth movement.

In the \textit{Fourth Symphony} the final movement serves as a recapitulation of themes in their original order in keeping with Schmidt’s concept of sonata form.\footnote{41}{Corfield, 190.} It begins with the opening theme, now played by a single horn. The solo horn is joined by the entire section, entering one at
a time, in an eerily poignant rendition of the opening music. Schmidt uses all four horns answering each other so as not to take away from the eventual return of the opening solo trumpet theme which occurs now at the end of the movement. The second theme is also heard again but not without some harmonic changes and melodic expansion and contractions as expected. The symphony concludes as it began with solo trumpet. Harold Truscott summarizes the work this way:

   It has been said that with the ultimate restatement of [the first theme] on the trumpet the Symphony has come full circle. It has not. This work is not a serpent with its tail in its mouth. In fact, it is impossible for any music to be circular, for, whatever the beginning and the end may be, something has happened in between which will affect the sound of that ending. We have been on a journey and we have come home, with a depth of understanding we did not have when we set out.\textsuperscript{42}

   The journey for the listener and perhaps for Schmidt as well has been one of realization and liberation. The central figures of trumpet and cello lead the way as Schmidt tells a tale of loss, grief, anger and finally of acceptance and peace. Along the way, the listener is privileged to glimpse the mature genius of Schmidt as he expresses in music that which cannot be expressed in words.

\textsuperscript{42} Truscott, 145-6.
CHAPTER 5
CULMINATION OF A STYLE

Musicians, especially composers, can reflect a variety of different musical sources and influences. Contemporary composer Jack Stamp writes “… my style is a synthesis of all those styles past and present that I particularly enjoy.”\(^3\) When listening to Stamp’s music the listener hears influence of his teachers, Robert Washburn, Fisher Tull and David Diamond, as well as the effect of his compositional role models, Aaron Copland and William Schuman. A similar lineage and family resemblance exist between the music of Karl Pilss and his primary composition teacher, Franz Schmidt. Whether by coincidence or design, the sound of Pilss’ music bears the unmistakable stamp of his teacher and mentor as illustrated in the *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* and the *Sonata for Piano and Orchestra*.

Melody

In his book *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, musicologist Jan LaRue describes melody as “the profile formed by any collection of pitches.”\(^4\) LaRue’s description goes beyond conventional notions of tunes and easily remembered phrases as the basis for melody. It encompasses a broader world of thought better suited to analysis of complex or highly chromatic melodies. LaRue’s broad, analytical view of melody provides a tool to accurately compare the melodies of Pilss and Schmidt.

The most significant trumpet melody in Franz Schmidt’s symphonic music occurs at the beginning and end of his *Fourth Symphony*. Schmidt’s choice of the trumpet is important autobiographically. He chose the trumpet for the opening and closing solos in the *Fourth Symphony* because the sound of the trumpet reminded him of his happy childhood in

Perchtoldsdorf. He played the trumpet during that time and often heard it played while walking in the village. It is perhaps the hearing even more than the playing that prompted its prominent use in the symphony. Schmidt’s opening melodic line has rhythmic flexibility, sequence, shape and an inherent growth from one phrase to the next. It relies on chromaticism and intervallic expansion and contraction with an implied harmony. The melody prominently features intervals of rising thirds and fourth (Example 1).

Example 1: Schmidt, *Symphony No. 4 in C Major* Movement 1, mm. 1-29. © Copyright 1934 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien/PH 551 Used by Permission

The opening theme from Pilss’ *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* exhibits the same melodic characteristics although the melody is accompanied and of a different character, (Example 2).

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45 Corfield, 163
The *Fourth Symphony* is not the only example of Schmidt’s use of particular intervals as the foundation for a melody. His *Third Symphony* also begins with rising thirds and fourths (Example 3). It is the most spirited, lyrical outpouring to be found in any of the four first movements.”

46 Truscott, 92.

Pilss writes similar music in the opening theme of the *Concerto for Trumpet and Piano*, also based on the characteristic intervals of thirds and fourths (Example 4).
Schmidt often writes melodies in which alternate groups of adjacent notes are broken up with leaps.\textsuperscript{47} Pilss does just that in the lyric opening them of the second movement of the *Concerto*. The melodic motif is based on the alternation between skips and stepwise motion (Example 5).

The effect is straightforward and plaintive due in part to the sparse scoring. Schmidt was also known to write melodies which “sound simple while being subtle.”\textsuperscript{48} In his *Second Symphony* he went so far as to mark the theme of the Allegretto con variazioni “einfach und zart” (simple and

\begin{align*}
\text{Example 4: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Piano*, Movement 1, mm. 26-35.} \\
\text{© With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc}
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\text{Example 5: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Piano*, Movement 1, mm. 19-26.} \\
\text{© With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc}
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\textsuperscript{47} Corfield., 135.  
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 86.
tender). The theme of the second movement of Pilss’ *Concerto* is also strikingly simple and tender.

Another common compositional technique that Schmidt used when writing melodies was the creation of active inner parts with a lyrical melody as in the first movement of the *Third Symphony*. The liveliness of the clarinet and second flute parts add drama to the flowing melody (Example 3). Pilss’ *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* and *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* show numerous examples of similar writing. In the first movement of the *Sonata* the opening theme is accompanied each time by rapid arpeggios in the piano. These are in sharp contrast to the dotted rhythms and flowing nature of the trumpet melody (Example 6).

![Example 6: Pilss Sonata for Trumpet and Piano, Movement 1, mm. 155-160.](image)

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49 Truscott, 93.
Pilss uses a similar technique in the final movement of the *Sonata* where a lyrical melody is supported by rapidly moving triplets. In this instance the motion in the piano adds urgency to the trumpet melody that may have otherwise been lost (Example 7).

![Example 7: Pilss, Sonata for Trumpet and Piano, Movement 3, mm. 1-9. © Copyright 1962 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien/UE 13489 Used by Permission](image)

The effect of the technique is obvious in the second movement of the *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*. While noticeable in the piano reduction it is more obvious in the full orchestration.
The lyrical melody is evident in the upper strings while the lower strings maintain the drama of the opening brass fanfare with tightly interwoven inner lines (Example 8).

Example 8: *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, Movement 2, mm. 11-16.
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An additional compositional similarity is evident in this same example. Schmidt writes a rising treble melody over a descending bass line. This occurs frequently enough to demand attention. Pilss chooses to use the same technique but inverted. In this instance, the bass line ascends chromatically while the melody maintains a steady downward movement (Example 8).

A further area of comparison concerns the structure of thematic material. In the case of Schmidt, many of his second themes occur over a pedal as at letter C in the first movement of his

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50 Ibid., 124.
First Symphony. In the first movement of Pilss’ Concerto the second theme occurs over a pedal which begins on D-flat and moves around the circle of fifths to C-flat in four measure increments (Example 9). A similar procedure occurs in the recapitulation a major third higher (Example 10).

Example 9: Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra, Movement 1, mm. 62-68. © With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc

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51 Corfield, 16
Example 10: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, Movement 1, mm. 160-167. © With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc

Another example occurs in Pilss’ *Sonata* where the opening theme of the second movement occurs over a pedal E-flat for nine measures (Example 11).
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Form and Structure

In Jan LaRue’s view,

the style-analytical view of musical form as a resultant and combining element requires a fresh, stimulating term to express the vitality and immediacy of a functional approach as well as to dissolve the rigidities suggested by the unfortunately static word “form.”\(^{52}\)

\(^{52}\) LaRue, 115
Instead of form or structure, LaRue defines the shape of music as growth. In his *Guidelines for Style Analysis* he states that analysis is a habit of regarding music first as a process of growth and then attempting to understand this growth by an analysis that fully reflects the character of musical flow. He considers large-dimension elements like balance and relationship between movements in dimensions, tempos, tonalities, textures, meters, textures and range of intensity. He also considers sources of shape, such as recurrence, development, response and contrast. These elements aid in illustrating the similarities between the music of Karl Pilss and his teacher Franz Schmidt from a growth perspective.

In his later years Schmidt identified closely with Johannes Brahms. He saw in himself the same desire to bring fresh ideas to old forms and structures. Like Brahms he always maintained a classical sense of form. One of his favorites was sonata form. Like Schmidt and Brahms, Pilss also favored traditional sonata form. He used it in the first movements of both the *Sonata* and *Concerto*. Schmidt went one step further and expanded the three part sonata form into an entire work. His *Fourth Symphony* is considered by some to be a one movement symphony while others view it as a three movement work. If viewed as three continuous movements, the structure closely resembles the three sections of sonata form. The first movement serves as the exposition. The second two are combined into a development. The finale is a recapitulation or reprise of the preceding movements. Pilss employs an identical technique in the coda of the final movement of the *Sonata*. In it, he restates the principal themes from each of the preceding movements but unlike Schmidt, he does so in augmentation, adding his own touch to his mentor’s example (Example 12).

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53 Ibid.
54 Corfield, 280.
55 Ibid., 113.
56 Truscott, 141.
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Other similarities between the two exist in growth outside the relatively static area of sonata form. Complex and dissonant climaxes are a distinctive feature of Schmidt’s later works.⁵⁷ Some of Pilss’ most dissonant harmonies occur at important structural points like the central passage in the first movement of the *Sonata*. Here the opening theme is restated following a chromatic passage marked by competing key centers. When the theme returns it is in the original key but scored an octave higher. Unlike the original statement, it is not stated verbatim but is accompanied by highly chromatic contrapuntal lines in the piano. The chromaticism and counterpoint (Example 13) are in marked contrast to the flowing accompaniment of the beginning and serve to highlight the tension in this passage (Example 14).

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⁵⁷ Corfield., 28.
Example 13: Pilss, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* Movement 1, mm. 100-108.
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Schmidt’s style is also recognizable for the “rhythmic abruptness of the close and the brevity of the final chord.” This feature can be seen clearly in the final five measures of the statement of the variation theme in the second movement of his Second Symphony (Example 15).

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58 Ibid., 85.

Although the character and mood are different, Pilss ends the first movements of both the *Concerto* (Example 16) and the *Sonata* (Example 17) with the same rhythmic abruptness.

Example 16: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, Movement 1, mm. 185-188. © With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc

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Schmidt often repeats a theme a second time a minor third higher as in the second subject of the *Second Symphony* in the opening theme and in the first movement of the *Third Symphony*.\(^{59}\) Pilss does the same thing in the first movement of the *Sonata* when the opening subject is first stated in g minor followed immediately by the same melodic line a minor third higher. The second phrase is then extended, another trait of Schmidt (Example 18).\(^{60}\)

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59 Ibid., 124.
60 Truscott, 44.
Over half of Schmidt’s works are written for organ alone or scored with organ. In his later years he composed a number of fugues for organ and also wrote fugal passages in his oratorio Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln. In the final movement of the Concerto Pilss displays his own contrapuntal skills by writing a 42 measure fugal passage in five voices using the main theme of the movement as the subject and fragments of the theme as the countersubject. In addition, he uses counterpoint as a compositional device in the transition of the same movement (Example 19).

Example 19: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, Movement 3, mm. 19-25. © With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc

Third movements’ in Schmidt’s symphonic works are frequently scherzos in the

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61 Tschulik, 79.
character of an Austrian Ländler. Pilss includes a scherzo as part of the second movement of the \textit{Concerto}. This passage has the musical effect of an additional third movement. The change in the middle of the slow second movement comes as a surprise to the first time listener unaware of the compositional relationship between Pilss and Schmidt. The effect is a blending of two movements into one. Schmidt also blends forms together. The \textit{Fourth Symphony} is performed as one continuous movement, like a tone poem. Harold Truscott views it in three movements. Thomas Corfield states that it has four movements. A recording by the Detroit Symphony lists the piece as having four tracks. These conflicting opinions illustrate the ambiguous formal structure of the work.

Schmidt frequently turns melodic figures into short fanfares using fragmentation and diminution. Pilss does the same thing in the piano part of the second theme in the \textit{Sonata}. Here he uses fragments of the opening theme in diminution and inversion to create a fanfare-like passage in the midst of the lyrical second theme (Example 20).

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\textsuperscript{62} Truscott, 138.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Corfield, 164.
\textsuperscript{66} Corfield., 286.

\end{small}
Example 20: Pilss, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*, Movement 1, mm. 70-75.
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Pilss also uses similar fanfare-like motives in the lyrical second movement of the *Concerto* when the horns play a bold statement in the middle of the lyrical first theme. These are derived from the movement’s opening brass chorale written in diminution (Example 21).
Harmony

Jan LaRue writes that the two main functions of harmony are color and tension.\(^67\) Harmony is at the center of western European music and as such provides a reliable method of comparing composers and compositional styles. Because of this emphasis on harmony and the clear conventions of harmonic practice passed down from the 18\(^{th}\) century, harmony provides one of the best evaluative tools for comparison. Quantifiable chords and harmonic analysis provides a basis for judging what is universal and what is unique to a composer or period. Schmidt is primarily a harmonic composer. Harmony is perhaps the most individual aspect of his music.\(^68\) In this sense, there are some harmonies and harmonic progressions that, while not unique to Franz Schmidt, are certainly characteristic of his work. One particular harmony is so distinctive that one writer has gone so far as to call it the “Schmidt chord.”\(^69\) Finding the same

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\(^67\) LaRue, 41.
\(^68\) Corfield, 282.
\(^69\) Ibid., 116.
harmonies and harmonic progressions in the music of Karl Pilss provides an unmistakable link between teacher and student.

One such distinctive harmonic trait is the use of semitone dissonance between upper voices and the bass at moments of particular importance. Pilss uses a similar harmonic device to emphasize moments of particular structural importance as illustrated in the first movement of the *Concerto*. This passage of prolonged whole step dissonance between the trumpet and the bass occurs at the end of the movement just prior to the coda (Example 22).

![Example 22: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, Movement 1, mm. 176-180. © With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc](image)

In the first measure of the second movement of the *Concerto* Pilss creates a feeling of tension in the brass chorale by placing a half-step dissonance prominently on the fourth beat of the measure. The structural significance of the opening measure is illustrated by a parallel melodic passage six measures later, where the dissonance is gone, releasing tension in anticipation of the simple opening theme of the movement (Example 23a and 23b).

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70 Ibid., 80.
Schmidt commonly uses an accompaniment of "alternating chords in the inner parts [which] create a mildly dissonant caressing effect."\textsuperscript{71} In Pilss’ music, a similar effect is heard in the first movement of the \textit{Concerto} where the slowly moving melody is accompanied by pulsating chord changes in the inner voices (Example 24).

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 91.
Example 24: Pilss, *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*, Movement 1, mm. 22-25. © With the kind authorization of Alphonse Leduc

In addition to the structural and tension relationship aspects of Schmidt’s harmonies, it is important to consider the influence of chord choice in the coloristic expression of his style. There are certain harmonic progressions that stand out in Schmidt’s music, for example, tonic moving to flat submediant followed by mediant to tonic in the reprise. He also favors certain chords. Use of the flat submediant and flat supertonic are among the “most distinctive features of Schmidt’s [harmonic] style.” Pilss adopts this harmonic practice as illustrated by the end of the second movement of the *Sonata*. A C-flat triad (the flat submediant of e-flat) is heard over a prolonged E-flat pedal which eventually resolves to an E-flat major triad at the final cadence. The chromatic color of the harmony creates a remarkable contrast to the diatonic simplicity of

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72 Ibid., 66.
73 Ibid., 15.
the trumpet melody while remaining firmly anchored by the pedal E-flats. The eventual resolution brings a feeling of peace and closure to the movement (Example 25).


This same passage contains one of the most harmonically significant examples of Pilss’ relationship to Schmidt; Pilss’ use of the “Schmidt chord” at a structurally significant moment in the work. Corfield writes “Schmidt tended to avoid the dominant thirteenth unless a minor ninth
was also present. From this preference stemmed a sonority so typical of Schmidt that Robert Wagner went so far as to call it the “Schmidt Akkord.” Until it resolves, it sounds like an E major triad over a G natural in the bass. When the seventh is present, the effect is of an E major triad over a dominant seventh of C.”

Schmidt first used this harmony in his opera *Fredigundis* to depict the beauty of the title character. Corfield continues, “The teasing illusion of bitoniality created by the ‘*Fredigundis* chord’ must have appealed to Schmidt, for from then on it is common in his music.” Finding this unique harmony in the music of Schmidt’s pupil Karl Pilss cements their relationship (Example 26).

![Example 26: Schmidt chord.](image)

Pilss uses the distinctive harmony in his more mature work for solo trumpet, the *Sonata*. It appears first in the final three measures of the second movement (Example 25). This creates a high degree of tension in contrast to the sustained tonic pitch in the trumpet. In this instance the transposed chord appears as a C major chord over an E-flat in the bass. The effect is fleeting but clearly an indication of the tension of the passage and a subtle acknowledgment of his teacher Franz Schmidt.

The second time the chord appears it is also in the *Sonata*, this time in the third movement. The important structural moment is the transition between the middle section and the

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74 Ibid., 116-17.
75 Ibid., 117.
return of the principal theme in the tonic key. The final chord before the return is a misspelled B major chord over a D natural in the bass. The root is spelled enharmonically as C-flat but the sound and effect are the same (Example 27). Once again, Pilss finds a way to insert this characteristic harmony at a critical juncture in the work (Example 27).

Example 27: Pilss, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*, Movement 3, m. 78.
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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The music of Karl Pilss is of great significance because the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* and the *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* are the best-known large-scale works written for solo trumpet in the late German Romantic style. The rich chromatic harmonies and lush melodies make these works a pleasure for performers and audiences alike. With so few compositions for trumpet in this style, these two pieces deserve a place in the standard literature for solo trumpet.

Pilss’ music contains numerous compositional features which point to Franz Schmidt as a primary compositional influence. Yet his writing has an original spirit that mark Pilss as the composer. Pilss’ works for solo trumpet illustrate what Franz Schmidt might have composed had he chosen to write a concerto or sonata for the trumpet. The beauty and creativity Schmidt shows when writing for the trumpet as a soloist in the orchestra show clearly the unrealized potential. Perhaps his student Karl Pilss has given trumpet players what Schmidt could not: the last large-scale German Romantic trumpet works. When placed in chronological comparison with other works of the time, they represent the end of an era.
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