



Paul HINDEMITH

Konzertmusik für Klavier, Blechbläser, und Harfen

Paul Hindemith (16 November 1895 – 28 December 1963) was a German composer, music theorist, teacher, violist, and conductor. He founded the Amar Quartet in 1921, touring extensively in Europe. As a composer, he became a major advocate of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) style of music in the 1920s, with compositions such as *Kammermusik*, including works with viola and viola d'amore as solo instruments in a neo-Bachian spirit. Other notable compositions include his song cycle *Das Marienleben* (1923), *Der Schwanendreher* for viola and orchestra (1935), the opera *Mathis der Maler* (1938), the *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* (1943), and the oratorio *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* (1946), a requiem based on Walt Whitman's poem. Hindemith and his wife emigrated to Switzerland and the United States ahead of World War II, after worsening difficulties with the Nazi German regime. In his later years, he conducted and recorded much of his own music. Most of Hindemith's compositions are anchored by a foundational tone, and use musical forms and counterpoint and cadences typical of the Baroque and Classical traditions. His harmonic language is more modern, freely using all 12 notes of the chromatic scale within his tonal framework, as detailed in his three-volume treatise, *The Craft of Musical Composition*. (*Life and career*) Paul Hindemith was born in Hanau, near Frankfurt, the eldest child of the painter and decorator Robert Hindemith from Lower Silesia and his wife Marie Hindemith, née Warnecke. He was taught the violin as a child. He entered Frankfurt's Dr. Hoch's Konservatorium, where he studied violin with Adolf Rebner, as well as conducting and composition with Arnold Mendelssohn and Bernhard Sekles. At first he supported himself by playing in dance bands and musical-comedy groups. He became deputy leader of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra in 1914 and was promoted to concertmaster in 1916. He played second violin in the Rebner String Quartet from 1914.

After his father's 1915 death in World War I, Hindemith was conscripted into the Imperial German Army in September 1917 and sent to a regiment in Alsace in January 1918. There he was assigned to play bass drum in the regiment band and also formed a string quartet. In May 1918 he was deployed to the front in Flanders, where he served as a sentry; his diary has him "surviving grenade attacks only by good luck", according to *New Grove Dictionary*. After the armistice he returned to Frankfurt and the Rebner Quartet. In 1921, Hindemith founded the Amar Quartet, playing viola, and extensively toured Europe with an emphasis on contemporary music. His younger brother Rudolf was the original cellist. As a composer, he became a major advocate of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) style of music in the 1920s, with compositions such as *Kammermusik*. Reminiscent of Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, they include works with viola and viola d'amore as solo instruments in a neo-Bachian spirit. In 1922, some of his pieces were played in the International Society for Contemporary Music festival at Salzburg, which first brought him to the attention of an international audience. The next year, he composed the song cycle *Das Marienleben* (The Life of Mary) and began to work as an organizer of the Donaueschingen Festival, where he programmed works by several avant-garde composers, including Anton Webern and Arnold Schoenberg. In 1927 he was appointed Professor at the *Berliner Hochschule für Musik* in Berlin.

Hindemith wrote the music for Hans Richter's 1928 avant-garde film *Ghosts Before Breakfast* (*Vormittagsspuk*) and also acted in the film; the score and original film were later burned by the Nazis. In 1929, Hindemith played the solo part in the premiere of William Walton's viola concerto, after Lionel Tertis, for whom it was written, turned it down. On 15 May 1924, Hindemith married the actress and singer Gertrud (Johanna Gertrude) Rottenberg (1900–1967).[1] The marriage was childless. The Nazis' relationship to Hindemith's music was complicated. Some condemned his music as "degenerate" (largely based on his early, sexually charged operas such as *Sancta Susanna*). In December 1934, during a speech at the Berlin Sports Palace, Germany's Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels publicly denounced Hindemith as an "atonal noisemaker". The Nazis banned his music in October 1936, and he was subsequently included in the 1938 *Entartete Musik* (Degenerate Music) exhibition in Düsseldorf. Other officials working in Nazi Germany, though, thought that he might provide Germany with an example of a modern German

composer, as, by this time, he was writing music based in tonality, with frequent references to folk music. The conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler's defence of Hindemith, published in 1934, takes this line. The controversy around his work continued throughout the thirties, with Hindemith falling in and out of favour with the Nazis. During the 1930s, Hindemith visited Cairo and also Ankara several times. He accepted an invitation from the Turkish government to oversee the creation of a music school in Ankara in 1935, after Goebbels had pressured him to request an indefinite leave of absence from the Berlin Academy. In Turkey, he was the leading figure of a new music pedagogy in the era of president Kemal Atatürk. His deputy was Eduard Zuckmayer. Hindemith led the reorganization of Turkish music education and the early efforts to establish the Turkish State Opera and Ballet. He did not stay in Turkey as long as many other émigrés, but he greatly influenced Turkish musical life; the Ankara State Conservatory owes much to his efforts. Young Turkish musicians regarded Hindemith as a "real master", and he was appreciated and greatly respected.

Toward the end of the 1930s, Hindemith made several tours of America as a viola and viola d'amore soloist. He emigrated to Switzerland in 1938, partly because his wife was of part-Jewish ancestry. At the same time that he was codifying his musical language, Hindemith's teaching and compositions began to be affected by his theories, according to critics such as Ernest Ansermet. Arriving in the U.S. in 1940, he taught primarily at Yale University, where he founded the Yale Collegium Musicum. He had such notable students as Lukas Foss, Graham George, Andrew Hill, Norman Dello Joio, Mel Powell, Yehudi Wyner, Harold Shapero, Hans Otte, Ruth Schönthal, Samuel Adler, Leonard Sarason, Fenno Heath, Tony-winning composer Mitch Leigh, and Oscar-winning film director George Roy Hill. Hindemith also taught at the University at Buffalo, Cornell University, and Wells College. During this time he gave the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard, from which the book *A Composer's World* (1952) was extracted. Hindemith had a long friendship with Erich Katz, whose compositions were influenced by him. Also among Hindemith's students were the future rocket scientist Wernher von Braun and the composers Franz Reizenstein, Harald Genzmer, Oskar Sala, Arnold Cooke, Robert Strassburg, and dozens of other notables. Hindemith became a U.S. citizen in 1946, but returned to Europe in 1953, living in Zürich and teaching at the university there until he retired from teaching in 1957.

Toward the end of his life he began to conduct more and made numerous recordings, mostly of his own music. In 1954, an anonymous critic for *Opera* magazine, having attended a performance of Hindemith's *Neues vom Tage*, wrote, "Mr Hindemith is no virtuoso conductor, but he does possess an extraordinary knack of making performers understand how his own music is supposed to go." Hindemith received the Wihuri Sibelius Prize in 1955. He was awarded the Balzan Prize in 1962 "for the wealth, extent and variety of his work, which is among the most valid in contemporary music, and which contains masterpieces of opera, symphonic and chamber music." Despite a prolonged decline in his physical health, Hindemith composed almost until his death. He died in Frankfurt from pancreatitis, aged 68. He and his wife are buried in Cimetière La Chiésaz, La Chiésaz, Canton of Vaud, Switzerland.

Hindemith's **Concert Music for Piano, Brass, and Two Harps, Op. 49** (German title: *Konzertmusik für Klavier, Blechbläser und Harfen, Op.49*) was composed in 1930 and has 4 movements:

- Ruhig gehende Viertel
- Lebhaft
- Sehr ruhig. Variationen
- Mäßig schnell, kraftvoll

First Performance was 1930-12-10, Chicago, Orchestra Hall, *Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Emma Lübbecke-Job (Piano), Hugo Kortschak (Conductor)*. First Publication was in 1930. Dedication was to Für Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Average Duration is 21 minutes.