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### The Musical Aesthetic of the *Singbewegung*

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#### Abstract

This paper investigates the musical aesthetic of the *Singbewegung* in relation its belief structures, but also in regard to some performance specifics. This in turn throws light on the necessity of investigating historically-informed performance practice not only from the point of view of older musical traditions, but also as a response to Romanticism, in order to gain a better understanding of our current practice. It was originally presented on 23 November 2014 as part of the "Reworkings" symposium held at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

#### Introduction

Much has been written about the *Singbewegung* and the *Jugendmusikbewegung* from sociological, cultural, pedagogical or political points of view, or some mixture thereof. Its general philosophy had a powerful influence on historically-informed performance practice at the time, one that still holds sway today. Little, if any, attention, however, has been given to the actual musical ideals – for example, the search for purity and simplicity as opposed to virtuoso performances – embraced by the movement and their effect on the predominant aesthetic ideals of the historically-informed performance practice, in particular as regards the performance of 15th and 16th-century music. Further, the *Singbewegung's* association with the Nazi regime after 1933 made it impossible to discuss its basic musical assumptions following the Second World War, because they seemed "irrevocably tainted and terminally exhausted".<sup>1</sup> This paper investigates the musical aesthetic of the *Singbewegung* in relation its belief structures, but also in regard to some performance specifics. This in turn throws light on the necessity of investigating historically-informed performance practice not only from the point of view of older musical traditions, but also as a response to Romanticism, in order to gain a better understanding of our current practice. It was originally presented on 23 November 2014 as part of the "Reworkings" symposium

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua Rifkin, *Opus 1* (1985), p. 49.

held at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. A significantly expanded version of this paper is forthcoming in the [Basler Beiträge für Historische Musikpraxis vol. 39](#). The Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, of course, provides a major example of the institutionalization of the reworking of music of earlier times in a new cultural context. In my research on Ina Lohr, a fascinating, charismatic woman who together with Paul Sacher and various other people founded the school in 1933 and is credited with holding it together for the first thirty years, I was nonplussed to discover that the continental performance of Renaissance music in the second half of the twentieth century was largely based on the German *Singbewegung's* rejection of Romanticism. Here I will first give a short introduction into the origins of this movement and its musical aesthetic, and then use this as a basis for understanding its musical aesthetic, as found in the sources and often still heard today.

### **History of the *Singbewegung***

The origins of the German *Singbewegung* go back to 1897 when a small group of adolescents, or *Wandervögel* (migrating birds) from the Steglitz Gymnasium in Berlin, led by the law student Hermann Hoffmann, went on long walks or trips, often singing for companionship, or to pass the time, or even in order to make sure that the group was walking fast enough to catch the last train home. Hilmar Höckner, a later member of the movement interpreted its beginnings as a "forceful eruption of youthful spirit in our times, a great protest of the young against the shallowness and mechanization of life, such as it appears particularly in the large cities" with the goal of liberating the young, so that they might lead a life of their own choice. In order to achieve this they created a large number of small associations, which later organized themselves into several larger ones.<sup>2</sup> The central amalgamating factor of the various groups, of course, was music. At first *Volkslieder*, folk songs, were the preferred musical vehicle, being perceived as works of art that brought people back to their roots. Shortly thereafter one came to see German songs from the 15th and 16th centuries as being those works in which man and nature were most closely united, an antithesis to industrialization, thus being highly suited to the building up of cohesive organizations. The participants were often accused of anachronism, of wanting to turn back the clock. This was rejected by the composer Walter Rein in 1924:

This is not "historicism" as some seemingly modern progressives accuse the young, no, this cultivation of early music [...] stems from another attitude towards the world. The joining together of young people for common walks, common work, common activities and life means a rejection of the refined I-culture, to which the individualism of the previous century has advanced, and the turn towards the commonweal in aspiration towards a goal that lies beyond that of the individual. The young sought connection with something greater, something above man. Music with its ability to create a community began to play a role. The path taken here could be none other than a renunciation of the Romantic – which made

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<sup>2</sup> „stellt einen gewaltigen Durchbruch jugendlichen Geistes in unserer Zeit dar, einen großen Protest der Jugend gegen die Verflachung und Mechanisierung des Lebens, wie sie besonders in den Großstädten zutage treten, bedeutet vor allem die Befreiung der Jugend zu einem eigenen jugendlichen Leben aus eigener Bestimmung und vor eigener Verantwortung. Zu diesem Leben hat sich die Jugend in unzähligen kleinen Gemeinschaften und einer Reihe größerer Bünde zusammengefunden, die jedoch ihrerseits wiederum von kleinen Gemeinschaften und Gruppen getragen werden.“ Hilmar Höckner, *Die Musik in der deutschen Jugendbewegung*, Wolfenbüttel, 1927, p. 1.

music into the reflection of one's own soul – and an advance towards a music which could be served, one whose anchor in the end lay in the cosmos [...]. With this music the young found an appropriate style for themselves, the image, or better said, the symbol of their communal life: *polyphony*.<sup>3</sup>

The degree of moral idealism within the movement becomes clear in this passage. As with all such movements, they wanted to change the world and make it a better place. From their own experiences they had come to realize that the feelings engendered by singing in a meaningful way with one another could be used to create a sense of community larger than themselves. For instance, in 1925 Hermann Reichenbach declared:

Now that one strips away this indifference and courageously shapes how one experiences life, now that one dares again to acknowledge faith, longing and life, allows them to have their entire creative effect in daily life, art takes on a completely different task. There are no psychological remnants that are pushing their way out, as life on the inside is in balance with that on the outside. Now music has suddenly become a material, a substance distinct from us, an organism outside of us, one which is, however, a symbol for the divine to the same degree that an animal is, or a landscape, a human social gathering. And it is because of this symbolic content that we are joined together. Not out of emotional affection, not for beauty, not as an expression of our personality, but as a necessary, self-evident act of living.<sup>4</sup>

Here we begin to see some of the fundamental underlying issues which will characterize the *Jugendmusikbewegung's* ideals concerning the performance of 16th-century music. The task was to bring music to life with other fellow human beings, and in doing so delve down to the substance of our being, thereby

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<sup>3</sup> Das ist nicht Historizismus, wie es manche modern gebärdende Fortschrittler der Jugend vorwerfen, nein, diese Pflege alter Musik [...]. Der Zusammenschluß der Jugend zu gemeinsamen Wandern, gemeinsamer Arbeit, gemeinsamem Tun und Leben bedeutete eine Abkehr von der verfeinerten Ichkultur, zu der sich der Individualismus des vergangenen Jahrhunderts gesteigert hatte, und ein Hinwenden zur Gemeinsamkeit im Streben nach einem über dem Ich liegenden Ziele. Die Jugend suchte Bindung an ein Größeres, Übermenschliches. Die Musik mit ihrer gemeinschaftsbildende Kraft begann eine Rolle zu spielen. Der Weg, der hier gegangen wurde, konnte gar kein anderer sein, als Abkehr von der Romantik, die die Musik zum Spiegelbild der eigenen Seele machte und Hinwenden zu einer Musik, der gegenüber ein Dienst möglich, die letzten Endes im Kosmischen verankert war [...] Mit dieser Musik fand die Jugend den ihr adäquaten Stil, das Abbild oder besser das Symbol ihres eigenen Gemeinschaftslebens: die P o l y p h o n i e. Walter Rein, "Erziehung zum polyphonen Singen", "Deutsche Musikpflege", ed. Fischer/Lade, Frankfurt/M, 1924, as cited in Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 595.

<sup>4</sup> "Nun war aber diese Blasiertheit abstreift und das Erleben des Lebens mutig gestaltet, nun man wieder wagt, Glaube, Sehnsucht und Liebe zu bekennen, im Alltag voll und ganz schöpferisch auswirken zu lassen, nun gewinnt die Kunst eine ganz andere Aufgabe. Es sind keine psychischen Restbestände da, die nach außen drängen, denn das Innenleben steht mit dem Außenleben im Gleichgewicht. Nun steht die Musik auf einmal stofflich da, substanzuell einen gegenüber, als ein Organismus außer uns, der aber ein Symbol des Göttlichen ist in demselben Maß, wie ein Tier, eine Landschaft oder eine menschliche Gesellschaft. Und um dieses Symbolgehaltes willen sind wir verbunden. Nichts als Gefühlsbewegtheit, nicht als Schönheit, nicht als Ausdruck unserer Persönlichkeit, sondern als ein notwendiger, selbstverständlicher Akt des Lebens.", Hermann Reichenbach, "Die Musik der Jugendbewegung", Melos 12 (1925), as cited in: Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 933.

establishing a connection with the divine. This is in contradiction to their perception of the Romantic approach, in which professional mastery was seen to be cultivated at the expense of true musical values. Heine Eppinger expressed this clearly:

We reject vile *virtuosity*, which trains a soulless, purely technical proficiency for use in concerts. All music-making should be pursued for the sake of the joy that it creates, and for the sake of the purifying and moralizing force that flows from it.<sup>5</sup>

Olga Pokorny Hensel formulated this in an even more extreme manner, implying that true music can only be "channeled" by artists who are willing to subordinate themselves to higher powers:

Art is only then really art when it brings us spiritual growth [...]. Only when we experience something divine in music and recognize in the creator of a work of art as a vessel through which the divine flows, is there noble music at all [...]. The artist must be the mediator and obey – in the truest meaning of the word – God.<sup>6</sup>

Thus for members of the *Singbewegung*, singing became a means of spiritual development, something to be worked on seriously, plumbed to the depths. This was what separated them not only from what they perceived to be the sentimental excesses of Romanticism, it is how they perceived that they might change the world for the better, overcome the problems that had led to World War I.

This attitude was taken yet further, to the extent that music itself almost was perceived as a godhead. Max Schlensoy voiced the opinion in 1920 that

Music flows from God, has no other purpose than the purpose (of all arts) itself: the representation of God. It is thus always religious in its origin, life and goal. This eternal music – music beyond all purposes – is called "Musik an sich" or "absolute music"! [...] Therefore it does not serve in a church service or in a religious observance; it does not issue from the mood of its creator, but from his convictions. Therefore one cannot approach it in a light-hearted state, i.e. with letting go, relaxation, but [only] with conviction, i.e. with structure, tension, not with the desire for leisure but with the desire for work. It knows no other laws than itself, as it itself is the law, that is the law of conviction, generosity, omnipercipiency and stringency. It also knows no standards, as it is a standard itself.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Das üble Virtuositentum, das eine seelenlose, reine technische Fertigkeit zum Konzertgebrauch erzeugt, lehnen wir ab. Alles Muzieren soll um der Freude willen, die es schafft, und um der läuternden, versittlichenden Kraft willen, die daraus quillt, getrieben werden." Heine Eppinger, *Singgemeinde 1* (1924), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> "Kunst ist nur dann wirkliche Kunst, wenn sie uns geistiges Wachstum bringt [...] Nur wenn wir in der Musik etwas Göttliches empfinden und im Schöpfer eines Kunstwerkes das Gefäß erkennen, durch das ein Göttliches strömt, gibt es überhaupt eine edle Musik [...]", Olga Pokorny, "Erneuerung und Veredlung der Hausmusik", *Die Laute* 3 (1919), p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> "Die Musik fließt aus Gott, hat keinen anderen Zweck als den Zweck (aller Kunst) an sich: Darstellung Gottes, ist also immer religiös in Ursprung, Leben und Ziel. Man nennt diese zeitlose und über alle Zwecke erhabene Musik auch die 'Musik an sich', die 'absolute'! [...] Deswegen dient sie auch

Once again we are reminded of the sublime nature of music, that it must be approached with seriousness, so that through it we can come closer to the divine and grow spiritually. In all these quotations we have consistently seen that music is perceived as a mediator to some greater power, or perhaps is even the greater power itself.

### **The *Singbewegung* in Relation to Performance Practice**

How did this moral/ethical background manifest itself in the performance practices of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, how did they differ from those of the Romantic? The differences can be summed up in two pairs of antonyms: objective vs. subjective and unsentimental vs. sentimental. For members of this movement, the Romantic style was emblematic for all evils of modern life: the desire to be entertained, to have one's emotions superficially tickled, going for the shiny glamor of current fashion, rather than plumbing the depths of cosmic meaning. In this context it makes sense that Fritz Jöde observed in 1921 that

The entire path through the musical Romantic of the previous century resulted in the predominance everywhere of subjective lyricisms in our musicality. Thus it is an error and gross contamination of style that today old madrigals are often sung like 19th-century choral works, in which the particular emphasis lies in the painstaking elaboration of the performance in the poetic sense; and it is high time to return from these poetic excesses in performance to the actual musical content of a capella music itself.<sup>8</sup>

What exactly was Fritz Jöde referring to when he wrote of "poetic excesses in performance"? This can perhaps be illustrated by an edition of the folksong "Ich weiß mir ein Maidlein hübsch und fein" set by numerous composers in the 19th century, among them Mendelssohn, Brahms, and here Richard Strauss.

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nicht dem Gottesdienst oder einer heiligen Handlung, denn sie ist selbst Gottesdienst und heilige Handlung. Sie entquillt nicht der Stimmung ihres Schöpfers, sondern seiner Gesinnung. Daher darf man ihr nicht mit Stimmung, d.i. Auflösung, Entspannung, nahen, sondern mit Gesinnung, d.i. Aufbau, Hochspannung, nicht mit dem Willen zur Muße, sondern mit dem Willen zur Arbeit. Sie kennt keine anderen Gesetze denn sich selbst, denn sie ist Gesetz, d.h. das Gesetz der Gesinnung, Großzügigkeit, das Allgeföhls und der Herbheit. Auch kennt sie keine Maßstäbe, denn sie ist selbst Maßstab." Max Schlenzog, "Die Erfüllung," *Die Laute* 4 (1921), p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> "Der ganze Weg durch die musikalische Romantik des vorigen Jahrhunderts hat es mit sich gebracht, daß subjektive Lyrismen an allen Ecken und Enden unserer Musikalität durchsetzen. So ist es ein Irrtum und eine arge Stilverunreinigung dazu, daß alte Madrigale heute oft wie Chöre des 19. Jahrhunderts [...] gesungen werden, bei denen ein besonderes Schwergewicht auf die Vortragsarbeit in dichterischem Sinne liegt, und es ist höchste Zeit, von diesem dichterischen Vortragsunwesen wieder zum eigentlichen musikalischen Gehalt der A capella-Musik zurückzukehren." Fritz Jöde, "Zur Wiedererweckung der alten Chorkunst", *Die Laute* 5 (1921), p. 19.



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hüt du dich! Sie sah dich nicht an durch ein  
Zaun; hüt du dich, ver - trau ihr nicht, hüt  
du dich! Sie gibt dir ein  
Kränzlein wohl - ge - macht; hüt du  
dich! Sie gibt dir ein Kränzlein wohl - ge - macht, für

9320

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ei - nen Nar - ren wirst du ge - acht; hüt du dich,  
hüt  
hüt  
dich, hüt du dich, hüt,  
du dich! Hüt du dich, ver -  
trau ihr nicht! Sie nar - ret dich, sie nar - ret  
dich; hüt du dich!

9320

Strauss was considered to be one of the leading anathemas of the Romantic style. Typical for this is Paul Kickstat's condemnation of this arrangement when he wrote in 1931 that it represents a "purely artistic juggling with the folksong", and further that its

melody is truly shaped into a choral art song of a highly Romantic nature. The art and skill of the arranger degenerates into mannerism. In spite of the extreme effort to write independent voices, all of the harmonic effects indelibly mark this air as a concert or virtuoso piece.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the harmonies themselves, which were not a subject of discussion, two aspects of this arrangement would have been considered decadent, unrelentingly Romantic by members of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*. The first is the homophonic harmonic style, which one attained best by accompanying the melody in thirds or sixths.<sup>10</sup> Walter Hensel characterized this style as being sentimental.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Ein rein artistisches Jonglieren mit dem Volkslied stellt beispielsweise der Satz "Ich weiß mir ein Maidlein hübsch und fein" dar. Hier wird wirklich die Volksweise zu einem chorischen Kunstlied mit hochromantischem Einschlag gemacht. Kunst und Können des Bearbeitens artet aus in Künstelei. Bei allem Streben nach selbständigen Stimmen stempeln alle harmonischen Effekte die Weise zu einem Konzert- und Virtuosenstück ab.", Paul Kickstat, "Der Volksliedsatz", Die Harmonie 1 (1931), as cited in Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 589.

<sup>10</sup> Walther Hensel, "Bearbeitung von Volksliedern", as cited in Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 208 and Walter Rein, op. cit., p. 596.



The second aspect is the care taken in marking the dynamics, particularly as evidenced at the end of the piece. Jöde opposed this approach, writing that as the dynamics are an automatic result of the association of the melodic line with the text, the only thing one needs to do is

make sure that the linear musical values do not in any way overstep a minimum that could cause damage, so that, for instance, an occasional crescendo or decrescendo must result solely from the architecture of the entire structure, but never may be applied subjectively for poetic reasons.<sup>12</sup>

The adumbration with which this manner of performance is rejected makes one wonder what these leaders of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* were really talking about. Luckily we have one specific reference to the Thomanerchor from 1926 in which Konrad Ameln complains about the frequent changes of tempo and strong alteration of dynamics, how they disturbed the "polyphonic framework of the piece"; in addition, the "quiet flow of the events" was often ruined by a "racing, nervous drive."<sup>13</sup> There is a recording available online of *In Dulci Jubilo*, a 14th-century Christmas song, made by this choir in 1930 which I think this eloquently demonstrates what Jöde and Ameln were talking about.<sup>14</sup>

Arnold Schering also spoke in 1931 of the necessity of having faster and more consistent tempi, going so far as to say that the conductor at that time had "no other function than that of a living metronome."<sup>15</sup> Although he was disdained by members of the *Singbewegung* as someone favoring a subjective approach to music,<sup>16</sup> Schering's advocacy of a tempo of around MM 80 for the semibreve matched theirs, musically and aesthetically:

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<sup>11</sup> Walter Hensel, "Zur Musikerziehung", as cited in *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 214.

<sup>12</sup> "was dann im weiteren in dynamischer Hinsicht jeweils zu beachten ist, ergibt sich aus der Verbindung mit dem Text dann ohne weiteres, und es ist ganz im Gegensatz zur heute noch herrschenden Chorschulung nur darauf zu achten, daß ein die linearen musikalischen Werte in keiner Weise beeinträchtigendes Mindestmaß nicht überschritten werde, daß z.B. ein auftretendes Crescendo oder Decrescendo sich ausschließlich aus der Architektonik des ganzen Baues zu ergeben hat, niemals aber subjektive Hinzufügung aus der dichterische Erwägung sein darf." Fritz Jöde, "Zur Wiedererweckung der alten Chorkunst", *Die Laute* 5 (1921), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> "Durch häufigen Wechsel der Geschwindigkeit, starke, steigend und fallend angewandte Veränderungen der Klangstärke wurde das polyphone Gefüge des Werkes verunklärt, ging der ruhige Fluß des Geschehens oftmals in einem überhasteten, nervösen Jagen unter." Konrad Ameln, "Singwoche auf Burg Ludwigstein, Ostern 1926", *Die Singgemeinde* 2 (1926), as cited in *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 270.

<sup>14</sup> [http://media.slub-dresden.de/fon/snp/b/016608/fon\\_snp\\_b\\_016608\\_02.mp3](http://media.slub-dresden.de/fon/snp/b/016608/fon_snp_b_016608_02.mp3) (accessed 25.09.2014). On the other hand in a review of a Bach cantata by the Thomaner in *Melos* 6 (1927), p. 384, Hans David writes, "In the cantata [...] the boys in the alto sang the aria; and in that one experienced the individual interpretation as being completely eliminated, one discovered the essence of the movement in a profundity, which no concert singer would be able to make accessible." ("In der Kantate [...] sangen die Knaben des Alt eine Arie; und indem man individuelle Interpretation als völlig ausgeschaltet empfand, ergründete sich das Wesen des Satzes in einer Tiefe, die kein Konzertgänger zu erschliessen vermöchte.")

<sup>15</sup> "so hatte der Dirigent keine andere Funktion als die eines lebendigen Metronoms." Arnold Schering, *Aufführungspraxis alter Musik*, 1931, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Fritz Jöde, *Musik: ein pädagogischer Versuch für die Jugend*, Wolfenbüttel, 1919, pp. 17-18.



All dissolution, ambiguity, subjectivity is thereby eliminated in advance. Even the music of the a capella singers in the 16th century, which in the eyes of posterity seems to float in the higher spheres, has its feet firmly on the ground in this regard. Where a *accelerando* or *ritardando* was desired, it was written into the music in such a way that in spite of a continual, steady beating of the *tactus* it seemed to happen automatically.<sup>17</sup>

Once again it is perhaps good to put this into perspective with the performance practices of the time with which they were contending. There is a recording online of the Johann Strauss Orchestra performing *Lobe den Herren* with a large choir in 1913. For your information the metronome marking is MM 49-50.<sup>18</sup>

The musical aesthetic also became characterized by a certain "objective" sound quality as early instruments became popular during the 1920's. Indeed representatives of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, instrument makers, professional musicians and musicologists in a meeting in 1930 spoke of "the transformation of the sound ideal from a thick, loud, spongy sound to a clear, precise, focused one, from color to line."<sup>19</sup> The "characteristic, quiet «non espressivo» sound"<sup>20</sup> of the recorder was seen to be particularly suitable for polyphony, as

the recorder player can only bring his instrument to the essence [of the matter] if he is prepared – by placing his own personal expressive desires to the side – to serve the sound. By striving after this sound and timbre, he relinquishes the expression of his feelings and overcomes that which is most personal to him. In that he serves the sound, he serves something objective. And it is just through this intent to serve the objective that he creates also the basis for a community.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Alles Zerfließende, Unbestimmte, Subjektive ist dadurch von vornherein ausgeschaltet gewesen. Selbst in den Augen der Nachwelt gleichsam in höheren Sphären schwebenden Musik der a Cappellisten des 16. Jahrhunderts hat in dieser Beziehung auf fester Erde gestanden. Wo ein *Accerlerando* oder *Ritardando* gewünscht wurde, ist dies derart in die Musik einbezogen worden, daß es trotz fortgehender gleichmäßiger *Tactusschläge* sich gleichsam automatisch einstellte." Arnold Scheering, *Aufführungspraxis alter Musik*, Leipzig, 1931, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> <http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu/mp3s/6000/6413/cusb-cyl6413d.mp3>, last accessed on 26.09.2014.

<sup>19</sup> "der Wandel des Klangideals vom dicken, lauten, schwammigen, zum klaren, präzisen, scharfen Ton, von der Farbe zu der Linie", Herbert Just, "Die Barockinstrumente in der Gegenwart," *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1930/31, p. 34 as cited in Erika Funk-Hennings, "Über die instrumentale Praxis der Jugendmusikbewegung – Voraussetzungen und Auswirkungen," in *Die Jugendmusikbewegung: Impulse und Wirkungen*, ed. by Karl-Heinz Reinfandt, Wolfenbüttel/Zürich, 1987, p. 226.

<sup>20</sup> "charakteristischen, stillen «non espressivo» sound," Waldemar Woehl, "Die Blockflöte in der Hausmusik", *Die Musik*, May, 1932, as cited in *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 462.

<sup>21</sup> "Der Blockflötenspieler kann sein Instrument nur zum Kern bringen, wenn er bereit ist, unter Zurückstellung seiner persönlichen Ausdruckswünsche dem Ton zu dienen. Indem er diesem Ton und Klang nachstrebt, verzichtet er auf Ausdruck seiner Empfindungen und überwindet sein Persönliches. Indem er dem Ton dient, dient er einem Objektiven. Und gerade durch diesen willen zum Dienst am Objektiven schafft er auch die Grundlagen zu einer Gemeinschaft." H.P. Gericke, "Mit Blockflötenspiel allein ist es nicht getan", *Der Blockflötenspiegel* 2 (1932), p. 183, as cited in Erika Funk-Hennings, "Über die instrumentale Praxis der Jugendmusikbewegung – Voraussetzungen und Auswirkungen," in *Die Jugendmusikbewegung: Impulse und Wirkungen*, ed. by Karl-Heinz Reinfandt, Wolfenbüttel/Zürich, 1987, p. 226.

The rigid, static quality of the recorder or old flutes and oboes was seen as being more appropriate for this music than the dynamic and expressive possibilities of modern instruments. This quality was then taken as a model for stringed instruments. Arnold Schering gives a description of this model in his book on performance practice:

One bowed the instruments [...] with a quietly guided bow, regular in timbre and without accents, so that the sound flows on continuously and softly like a recorder.<sup>22</sup>

and further in a footnote:

This playing without pressure and accentuation, which comes equally from the construction of the instruments, the peculiarities of the old bow and the stringing, is difficult for our modern players and is only attained after much practice with great self discipline [...]. By putting on a mute, the harshness of the modern instrument can be softened.<sup>23</sup>

Or as Walther Pudelko wrote in the concluding remarks to his edition of five pieces by Dowland for stringed instruments:

A long, quiet bowing and the greatest discretion in vibrato will best match the sound of the viol family. Any soloistic impulse must be destructive, and even then, when an individual voice or the whole structure cries out for expression and intensification, one may not use today's style of playing to breach the limits of the integrity [of the whole].<sup>24</sup>

Thus through the gradual introduction of instruments, first as an adjunct to the vocal polyphony, and then in their own right, the aesthetic ideals of purity and objectivity came to be associated with all of early music, not just with the polyphony of the 15th and 16th centuries. Instrumentalists were expected to cultivate the same abstract sound as the vocalists, and for the same reason: through objectivity one created a sense of community, created the sense of direct contact with the music for those immediately involved.

There are unfortunately no recordings from this period of groups associated with the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, a fact that no doubt has to do with their scruples about singing for audiences, for people who did not take part in the actual act of making music. What is striking, however, is how many of the above descriptions have been negative, speaking out against what is not wanted, not just simply stating – as we find in most of the treatises of earlier times – how something is to be done.

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<sup>22</sup> "Man strich die Instrumente [...] mit ruhig geführtem Bogen, gleichmäßig im Ton und ohne Akzente, so daß der Klang ununterbrochen und weich wie der einer Blockflöte dahinströmte." Arnold Schering, *Aufführungspraxis alter Musik*, Leipzig, 1931, p. 75-76.

<sup>23</sup> "Dieses druck- und akzentlose Spiel, das sich ebenso aus dem Bau der Instrumente wie aus der Eigenart des alten Bogens und des Saitenbezugs ergab, fällt unsern heutigen Spielern schwer und wird erst nach längerem Üben unter scharfer Selbstkontrolle erreicht [...]. Durch Aufsetzen des Dämpfers kann die Schärfe der modernen Instrumente gemildert werden." *Ibid.*, p 76 footnote 1.

<sup>24</sup> "Ein langer, ruhiger Bogenstrich und grösste Zurückhaltung im Vibrato werden am besten die Klangfarbe der Violenfamilie treffen. Jede solistische Anwendung muss zerstören und auch dann, wenn die einzelne Stimme oder die Gesamtheit nach Ausdruck und Steigerung begehren [...] darf nicht die heutigen Spielart die Einheit sprengen." Walther Pudelko, *John Dowland: Fünf Stücke für Streichinstrumente*, Kassel, 1923, Nachwort.

I think this reflects the attitude of those attempting to change the musical conventions, the performance habits of decades, an enormous task. It is only under such circumstances that August Halm, the musician and pedagogue who served as the figurehead of the educational, reformative portion of the *Singbewegung*, could answer to the question of how the performer should proceed when faced with the decision of how to phrase in the following manner:

He shouldn't phrase at all, for he in particular should not decide. The theme wants to be played as it is written, thus in a manner where no phrasing, not even an undoubtedly correct one, is forced upon the listener.<sup>25</sup>

On one level this goes to the opposite extreme, is an attempt to reduce the Romantic effulgence of personal interpretation to nothing. This is, of course, an impossibility, as the decision to perform without Romantic expressive devices is also an expression of individual taste. But in connection with the recordings mentioned above it can perhaps be understood as a very human reaction: if too much is bad, then none must be good. Furthermore, it is in line with Richard Taruskin's comments on modernist historical reconstructions where "the artist trades in objective, factual knowledge, not subjective feeling. His aim is not communication with his audience, but something he sees as a much higher, in [T. S.] Eliot's words "much more valuable" goal, communion with Art itself."<sup>26</sup>

Konrad Ameln, however, expressed this desire for objectivity in a more positive manner, suggesting that the music should be in the forefront of a performance, rather than being a reflection of the personality of the performer in his comments on a presentation of Leonard Lechner's Passion according to St. John:

What made this performance particularly valuable for [him] was the circumstance that the choir was successful to a high degree in singing objectively, that is avoiding any investment of personal feelings or personal agitation, so that the choir, or better said its members, did not sing *from themselves*, but rather let *it* sing and only served as instruments [for the music]. The singers themselves will be most aware how far they really succeeded and how much we all still have to overcome various inhibitions for a perfect rendering of polyphonic works.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Wie hat denn nun der Vortragende zu verfahren? Wie wird er in einem Fall, wo er zu wählen hat, phrasieren? Halten wir der Frage stand, und geben wir die beste Antwort, die wir wissen. Gar nicht soll er phrasieren, denn er hat gerade nicht zu wählen. Das Thema will so gespielt sein, wie es komponiert ist, also so, daß den Zuhörer keine, auch keine zweifellos richtige Phrasierung aufgezwungen wird, wo der Autor selbst neben und zugleich mit ihr noch eine andere offen läßt und sogar andeutet, ja mit-sprechen lassen will." August Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen der Musik*, München, 1913, p. 215.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Taruskin, "On Letting the Music Speak for Itself?", in *Text & Act: Essays on Music and Performance*, New York, 1995, p. 61.

<sup>27</sup> "Was mir diese Aufführung besonders wertvoll machte, war der Umstand, daß es dem Chor gelang, in einem hohen Maße objektiv zu singen, d.h. jedes Hineindeuten von Ichgefühlen und -erregungen zu vermeiden, so daß nicht der Chor, bzw. seine Glieder etwas *a u s s i c h h e r a u s* sangen, sondern daß sie *e s* singen ließen und nur dienende Werkzeuge waren. Wieweit das wirklich gelungen ist, und daß bis zu einer vollendeten Wiedergabe polyphoner Werke wir alle noch mancherlei Hemmungen zu überwinden haben, wird gerade den Sängern am meisten zum Bewußtsein gekommen sein." Konrad Ameln, "Singwoche auf Burg Ludwigstein, Ostern 1926", *Die Singgemeinde 2* (1926), as cited in *Die*

I hope, however, that it has by now become clear that a large portion of the aesthetics of most historically-informed performances of 15th- and 16th-century (and later) music on the Continent, as well as the interest in this earlier period, was a result of a romantic rejection of Romanticism and all that was perceived to be connected with it.

We, and I include myself in that we, then in the second half of the twentieth century turned this rejection into perfection: perfect intonation, perfect togetherness, absolute beauty, leaving out the all so important question about what this music was intended to say, to express. We did this with the virtuous feeling that we were being true to the past, bringing the music of earlier centuries back to life in accordance with the "rules" of performance practice of those times, being fully unaware (and again I include myself among the ignorant) that what we were really doing was carrying on and developing the anti-Romantic aesthetic of the early twentieth century. In our *naïveté* and excitement and passion for the beauty of this music, we were able to blank out the influences of our own culture on our ideas of how it should sound, we were certain that we being true to the intent of its composers. I wish, however, to encourage an increasing awareness of the influence our own society, our own culture has on our musical decision-making. Openly acknowledging this would in turn – speaking ideally – stimulate greater creativity in interpretation of the sources, as they would increasingly gain the function of tools by means of which we search for greater understanding of the music which we then knowingly perform within our own cultural context.

At the same time this acknowledgment would enable us to perceive and investigate the parallelism in time and space of this "objectivist" musical aesthetic with the "modernist" one of Stravinsky. Although the latter arose in a different cultural context, had sway with other musicians, the one complements the other. Both of these movements were seeking a "new" music, one lacking the nimbus the Romantic era. *Neue Sachlichkeit* sought novelty through the creation of new objective works, music suitable for modern ears. The *Jugendmusikbewegung*, however, sought salvation through older music, as in the words of Gerardus van der Leeuw, "the quality of age is one of the most important means which enables art to express the holy."<sup>28</sup> Common to both were the desire for objectivity and clarity and the breaking away from traditional perception and analysis of music combined with a search for something new.<sup>29</sup>

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deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zurich, 1980, p. 270.

<sup>28</sup> Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art*, New York, 2006, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> Two protagonists of both movements came together in Basel in 1929: Paul Sacher and Ina Lohr. Paul Sacher is known not only for his creation of the Basel Chamber Orchestra, but also for his commissions of many of most important compositions of the 20th century. Ina Lohr is largely unknown today, but became Paul Sacher's assistant shortly after her arrival in Basel from the Netherlands, and was involved not only with musical decision-making in regard to the orchestra, but also was one of the primary movers in the founding of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 1933. Indeed she was largely responsible for its curriculum and for keeping the school on track for its first thirty years. Thus these two people, significant in the development of both *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the Early Music movement, were active in both fields. It does not surprise, therefore, that they applied the same aesthetic criteria to both. Indeed Christopher Schmidt, a student at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis from 1947-1951, in the context of a discussion (31 October 2014) on Ina Lohr's use of solmization remarked that it was a means of breaking away from the functional theory, that she wanted to hear "new sounds," and that this was a characteristic she shared with Paul Sacher.

The music aesthetic of the Jugendmusikbewegung can thus be seen to represent not only the desire to break with the perceived evils of Romanticism, but also as the advocacy of an entirely new approach to music, for new sounds, for modernity. And thus Wilhelm Stählin was fully justified in his fears when he wrote in 1927 that

Judicious leaders of the *Singbewegung* are themselves moved by the concern that they may get stuck in something aesthetic, that a new method or musical style could come from it [...] <sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>"Einsichtige Führer der Singbewegung sind selbst bewegt von der Sorge, daß sie in einer ästhetischen Sache stecken bleiben, daß daraus eine neue Methode oder eine musikalische Mode werden könnte [...]", Wilhelm Stählin, "Die Bedeutung der Singbewegung für den evangelischen Kirchengesang", Der 30. deutsche evangelische Kirchengesangsvereinstag in Nürnberg vom 15.-17.10.1927, Cassel, 1928, as cited in Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, Wolfenbüttel/Zürich, 1980, p. 837.

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