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An Educational Example: Hanns Eisler's *Das Vorbild* Revisited

Alyssa Bree Wells

Despite Hanns Eisler's declaration in a 13 August 1952 letter to Bertolt Brecht that the composition on which he was currently working, *Das Vorbild* (The Example), was to sound like the 'Aufbau des Sozialismus' (the building of socialism), the work was not received with unanimous praise in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).¹ Premiered amidst debates between composers and GDR cultural officials over the theorization and practical applications for socialist realism, both Eisler and his triptych for alto voice and orchestra with texts by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe were decried by some and lauded by others. Members of the East German composers' union, the *Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler* (VDK), held conflicting opinions about *Das Vorbild* prior to its premiere, largely due to an ongoing debate as to whether or not Eisler was receiving preferential treatment.² When the work premiered at the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* (Festival of Contemporary Music), a series of concerts intended to represent the future of music under socialism, the GDR's state-controlled press commended *Das Vorbild's* ability to represent the cultural heritage of the GDR and serve as an example of socialist realism.³ Despite the praise, the composers', critics', and cultural officials' largely negative responses to Eisler and *Das Vorbild* have subsequently resigned the work to be a mere footnote in his compositional output.⁴

Situating *Das Vorbild* within the dual contexts of its premiere during the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* and Eisler's ideological and educational goals reveals the value of this forgotten 'example'. Indeed, revisiting *Das Vorbild* facilitates a more nuanced

1 This article is a revised version of my paper at the conference *Neue Sachlichkeit, Political Music, or Vernacular Avant-Garde? Hanns Eisler and his Contemporaries* (Copenhagen, 2015). The phrase 'Aufbau des Sozialismus' had become popular following the Second Party Conference of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland* (SED) in 1952. Daniel Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR: Institutionen, Organisationen und die erste Komponistengeneration bis 1961* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999), 141.

2 Ibid. 140.

3 The question of cultural heritage, and musical heritage more specifically, within the GDR has received in-depth discussion by Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

4 Until this article, *Das Vorbild* has largely been understood as receiving only harsh criticism from party functionaries and other musicians in the GDR. Arnold Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?: Hanns Eislers Goethe-Kompositionen* (Berlin: Edition Bodoni, 2013); Heidi Hart, *Hanns Eisler's Art Songs: Arguing with Beauty* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2018).

understanding of how Eisler attempted to use socially relevant music to ameliorate the problems he identified as existing because of *Musikanalphabetismus* (music illiteracy) and to assist audiences in learning about their social situation. These goals represent what I term to be Eisler's *educational impulse*, which was developed during his time studying with Arnold Schoenberg. It was only while living in the GDR that his beliefs generally aligned with the dominant political group. Thus, in the GDR, his music now had opportunity to serve the functions he had advocated for over thirty years, rendering *Das Vorbild* an important artistic and ideological statement.

This re-evaluation shows a new interpretation of *Das Vorbild* and Eisler's role in the definition and creation of a socialist musical culture. Ultimately, *Das Vorbild* demonstrates how Eisler's educational impulse functioned – without the problems of capitalism – in the GDR.⁵ This article subsequently locates the origins of Eisler's educational impulse and acknowledges how it shaped *Das Vorbild* through an exploration of his writings. Further contextualization with archival material pertaining to the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* and an analysis of *Das Vorbild's* musical and textual contents uncovers how Eisler sought to apply his educational impulse within a socialist context.

Foundations of Eisler's Educational Impulses

Eisler's criticism of bourgeois musical culture led him to be highly concerned with both the function and reception of music in society. Above all, he believed that music should have a purpose and that it should be easily understood by the proletariat, two principles he contended were absent from many of the different countries and societies in which he resided.⁶ Indeed, as musicologists Albrecht Betz, Joy Calico, Hermann Danuser, and Horst Weber, among others, have noted, whether he was writing in the capitalist Weimar Republic or United States, or the socialist GDR, Eisler's steadfast commitment to Marxist thought was always present in his compositional output and theoretical writings, in which he argued that music should attain relevance to society by raising awareness of class struggles.⁷

5 Eisler articulated concerns about music under capitalism succinctly in a 1927 essay, writing that 'Diese Art des Kunstbetriebes enthüllt wie keine den Zusammenhang zwischen Kunst und Kapital. Der Grundsatz des bürgerlichen Kunstidealismus, die Unabhängigkeit der Kunst von der politischen und ökonomischen Situation der Gesellschaft ist heute bereits ins Wanken geraten.' (This kind of art reveals like no other the connection between art and capital. The principle of bourgeois artistic idealism, the independence of art from the political and economic situation of society, has begun to waver.) Hanns Eisler, 'Vom bürgerlichen Konzertbetrieb [1928]', *Hanns Eisler. Gesammelte Schriften 1921–1935*, ed. Tobias Faßhauer and Günter Mayer (Hanns Eisler Gesamtausgabe, series IX, vol. 1.1: Wiesbaden, Leipzig, Paris: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007), 84–86, at 85.

6 For more on the development of this ideology, see the essays in 'II. Die Entwicklung der politischen und ästhetischen Position Eislers', *Hanns Eisler, Das Argument* (Sonderband 5), ed. Wolfgang Fritz Haug (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1975), 57–153.

7 Eisler attributed his interest in Marxism to his experience of the October Revolution in 1917. Hanns Eisler, 'Kurze Selbstbiographie I [1954]', *Hanns Eisler. Musik und Politik – Schriften 1948–1962*, ed. Günter

Yet, for this function to be met, music must be easily understood by the audience; a goal which he found other composers in the era to cast aside in favour of subjective sonic expression of the self.⁸ Beyond music's aural accessibility, Eisler also found that many composers gave little consideration for the relevance of music to the lived experiences of their listeners. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Eisler was repeatedly critical of composers' lack of regard for their listener's musical knowledge and their avoidance of socially aware musical content.⁹ As a part of these critiques, Eisler offered solutions that often involved educational measures for his audiences.

In his 1927 essay, 'Musik und Musikverständnis,' Eisler criticized the music of modernist composers, saying that 'the evaluation of a piece of music now requires a great knowledge of the elements of harmony, polyphony, and form.'¹⁰ Without these, concert hall music was subsequently inaccessible to the layperson not educated in music. He would continue on to say that

the fact that the listener is only given the common emotional content does not put him in a position to really accept and understand the play; he will then be in the same situation as one who hears a Chinese lecture without understanding Chinese; he will notice that the speaker soon speaks angry, sometimes sad, sometimes sentimental, but he will not know what it is actually about.¹¹

He further argued that this is the case for Johann Sebastian Bach, whose music is such 'that the listener without a musical education cannot grasp anything.'¹² Despite the inaccessibility of Bach's music, Eisler's teleological view of music history caused him to maintain throughout his life that Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven were integral to the

Mayer (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 336. Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler Political Musician*, trans. Bill Hopkins (Cambridge University Press, 1982); Joy Calico, "'The Karl Marx of Music': Hanns Eisler Reception in the United States after 1947," in *Hanns Eisler: 's müßt dem Himmel Hölenangst werden*, ed. Maren Köster (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 1998); Hermann Danuser, 'Hanns Eisler: Zur wechselhaften Wirkungsgeschichte engagierter Musik,' in *Die Wiener Schule heute* (Mainz: Schott Musik International, 1983); Horst Weber, *I Am Not a Hero, I Am a Composer: Hanns Eisler in Hollywood* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 2012).

8 Arnold Schoenberg undoubtedly influenced Eisler's opinion of subjectivity in music.

9 Eisler often described this as 'progressive music.'

10 'Die Bewertung eines Musikstückes setzt nun eine große Kenntnis der Elemente der Harmonie, der Polyphonie, der Form voraus'; Eisler, 'Musik und Musikverständnis [1927]', *Eisler. Gesammelte Schriften 1921–1935*, 55–59, at 58.

11 *Ibid.*: 'Daß dem Hörer nur der allgemeine Gefühlsinhalt vermittelt wird, setzt ihn noch nicht in die Lage, das Stück wirklich aufzunehmen und zu verstehen, er wird dann in derselben Situation sein, wie einer der einen chinesischen Vortrag anhört, ohne Chinesisch zu verstehen; er wird bemerken, daß der Redner bald zornig, bald traurig, bald sentimental spricht, wird aber nicht wissen, worum es sich eigentlich handelt.'

12 *Ibid.*: 'daß ein Hörer ohne musikalische Vorbildung davon nichts erfassen kann.'

cultivation of a musically educated public.¹³ This approach was clearly borrowed from his composition lessons with Arnold Schoenberg. As a student of Schoenberg, Eisler would have been introduced to the concept of using historical examples from the 'Classical and Romantic Masters' in lieu of examples created solely for the purpose of instruction.¹⁴ In a 1958 interview with Nathan Notowicz, Eisler commented upon Schoenberg's teaching style, stating that Schoenberg had an adage for his students, frequently saying that 'with me you will solely hear what I have learned from the great masters'.¹⁵

In the same 1927 essay, Eisler observed that this *Musikanalphabetismus* was exacerbated by financial restrictions, for in order to gain the knowledge necessary to comprehend musical content, one must possess the financial means to educate oneself. He also suggested that the ultimate solution to this problem would require the musical education of everyone, starting from childhood; however, this would prove untenable within the context of a capitalist society. As the analysis of *Das Vorbild* will demonstrate, by 1952 Eisler had devised a way to provide his listeners with musical archetypes within a composition that could facilitate comprehension of the whole work and subsequently provide the audience with a lesson in musical literacy.

Eisler's concerns about music education's entanglement with social and economic systems would also be evident in a 1940 book proposal to Oxford University Press, where he found it necessary to analyse 'the development of modern music in its relations to general social trends of modern times'.¹⁶ His outline for this analysis gave a significant

- 13 In his 1951 essay, 'Brief nach Westdeutschland', Eisler described the ongoing crisis music in capitalism and proposed several solutions. 'Den unerfahrenen Hörer betrachtet er [der moderne Komponist] mit Überheblichkeit, denn er weiß, daß Musik Erfahrung verlangt und einem ungeübten Ohr Traditionelles fremd, Neues aber absurd klingen muß, und daß Kunstgeschmack und Urteilsfähigkeit sich erst durch Erfahrung und Bildung entwickeln. Er weiß auch, daß klassische Musik nicht ohne weiteres verstanden werden kann, und daß die großen Werke Bachs, Mozarts, Beethovens musikalisch gebildete Hörer voraussetzen.' (He [the modern composer] regards the inexperienced listener with arrogance because he knows that music requires experience, and that an un-experienced ear, for whom the sound of the classical tradition is strange, the new must sound absurd; and that artistic taste and judgement only develop through experience and education. He also knows that classical music cannot be easily understood, and that the great works by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven presuppose musically educated listeners); Eisler, 'Brief nach Westdeutschland [1951]', *Eisler. Schriften 1948–1962*, 179–91, at 180.
- 14 Andreas Spörri, 'Erich Schmid, ein Meisterschüler von Arnold Schoenberg', *Journal of the Arnold Schönberg Center*, 3 (2001), 213. Günter Kochan in Asriel, 'Komponist und Hörer III: Der Kompositionsprozess und einige Möglichkeiten seiner Formalisierung bei der Analyse', *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft*, 18 (1976), 341.
- 15 'Bei mir können Sie nur das hören, was ich selbst von den großen Meistern gelernt habe.' Nathan Notowicz, *Wir reden hier nicht von Napoleon. Wir reden von Ihnen!* (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1971), 49.
- 16 This proposal would result in the book *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947); Hanns Eisler, 'Why is Modern Music so Difficult to Understand? Oxford University Press, London and New York [1940]', *Hanns Eisler. Musik und Politik – Schriften 1924–1948*, ed. Günter Mayer (München: Rogner & Bernhard, 1973), 469–70, at 469.

portion of the book to a criticism of the 'lack of truly progressive musical pedagogics' that did not take the contemporary – that is, a Marxism-informed – point of view into consideration.¹⁷ To Eisler, musical progress only could occur following the acceptance of a convention into society:

It is clear that when a phenomenon has become accepted as a convention in music, the ear in course of the development as well as the imagination of the artist draw consequences. This is one of the most important engines alongside the social in the evolution of musical technique.¹⁸

Thus, music stagnated without a socially progressive musical pedagogy. Without music education for all, the audience could not gain sufficient familiarity with modern techniques so as to render them conventional, and therefore be accepted. This is consistent with his earlier 1936 statements about the need for composers to consider the musical knowledge that an audience already possesses: the music's political or social message could only be understood if the musical content was aurally intelligible to the audience.¹⁹

Without music education for all, Eisler proposed that composers must instead be concerned with altering the function of music in society, writing in 1931:

For history teaches us that each new style of music does not emerge from an aesthetically new standpoint, that is, does not present a material revolution, but

17 Ibid. 470. It should be noted that 'progressive pedagogics' differs from 'progressive music', in that a progressive pedagogy reflects a concern with music education while 'progressive music' is most frequently used by Eisler to describe musical content.

18 'Es ist klar, daß, wenn sich in der Musik ein Phänomen als Konvention durchgesetzt hat, das Ohr im Laufe der Entwicklung sowie die Phantasie des Künstlers daraus Konsequenzen zieht. Das ist einer der wichtigsten Motoren neben dem Sozialen in der Evolution der musikalischen Technik.' Hanns Eisler, 'Einführung in die moderne Harmonie [1939]', *Eisler. Schriften 1924–1948*, 442–53, at 445.

19 This approach reflects Eisler's contention that in a new musical culture, audiences would have a more developed understanding of music. The masses could come to understand new music through the implementation of a pedagogical approach that unites theory with practice. In 1936, Eisler argued that 'Das Erlernen von musikalischer Logik wird selbstverständlich zugleich mit dem Erlernen eines Instruments verknüpft sein müssen. Es ist der große Fehler bürgerlicher Musikerziehung auch in der Pädagogik, Theorie von Praxis zu trennen. Wir müssen das Anwachsen des Musikanalphabetismus u. a. auch dieser Tatsache zuschreiben. Eine neue Musikpädagogik darf also Theorie und Praxis nicht trennen, sondern muß eine aus der anderen entwickeln.' (Of course, learning musical logic will have to be linked to learning an instrument at the same time. It is the great mistake of bourgeois music education also in pedagogy, to separate theory from practice. Among other things, we must ascribe the growth of musical illiteracy to this fact. A new music pedagogy must not separate theory and practice, but they must develop one from the other.) Eisler, 'Vorbemerkung des Autors: Einleitung zum Trio Präludium und Fuge über B-a-c-h [1936]', *Eisler. Schriften 1924–1948*, 377–79, at 377.

that the change of the material is inevitably conditioned by a historically necessary change in the function of music in society at all.²⁰

At the time this essay was written, Eisler believed that the way in which music's function could best be altered was through an engagement with the *Arbeitermusikbewegung* (worker's music movement).²¹ Consequently, composers must be willing to supply art that becomes 'die große Lehrmeisterin der Gesellschaft' (the great educator of society) by engaging with the political and social lives of the proletariat through music.²² Eisler demonstrated these ideas in practice in his *Lehrstück, Die Maßnahme* (1930–1931), which repositioned music so that it would not be something to be consumed. In this musical-theatrical compositional collaboration with Bertolt Brecht, music is a tool for teaching audiences about political topics through participation, raising their awareness of oppression. Eisler's continued advocacy for music as a social-educational tool would be readily apparent in *Das Vorbild*.

Eisler's desires to educate audiences about music and their social conditions remained a core part of his musical philosophy throughout his life. Yet until he came to live in the GDR in 1949, the majority of his efforts to use music as an educational tool were constructed in opposition to the bourgeois concert business that he found so detestable. Eisler consistently argued that 'only after the proletariat seizes power a new musical culture can gradually emerge'.²³ Without such a revolution, music would have to operate within the constraints of capitalism. Thus, after his move to the GDR, Eisler would find himself involved in what he described in 1951 as the GDR's 'Phase des Lernens' (phase of learning), wherein he had the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of a new musical culture – not just its theorization.²⁴

Eisler in the German Democratic Republic

The new musical culture of the GDR was guided by the idea of socialist realism, which had been instituted by the *Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland* (SMAD; Soviet Military Administration in Germany) while installing the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei*

20 'denn die Geschichte lehrt uns, daß jeder neue Musikstil nicht entsteht aus einem ästhetischen neuen Standpunkt, also keine Materialrevolution darstellt, sondern die Änderung des Materials zwangsläufig bedingt wird durch eine historisch notwendige Änderung der Funktion der Musik in der Gesellschaft überhaupt.' Eisler, 'Die Erbauer einer neuen Musikkultur [1931]', *Eisler. Gesammelte Schriften 1921–1935*, 132–52, at 148.

21 Eisler had been significantly involved in the *Arbeitermusikbewegung* throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

22 Eisler, 'Die Erbauer einer neuen Musikkultur', 151.

23 'erst nach Ergreifung der Macht durch das Proletariat kann eine neue Musikkultur allmählich entstehen.' Eisler, 'Musik und Musikverständnis [1927]', 59.

24 Eisler, 'Musik in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik [1951]', *Eisler. Schriften 1948–1962*, 147–53, at 147.

Deutschlands (SED; Socialist Unity Party of Germany) as the party of political control in the GDR.²⁵ By 1952, musicians and cultural officials in the GDR were involved in discussions about socialist realism that addressed the very issue that Eisler had begun to explore in the mid-1920s: music's relationship to the masses. Specifically, the *Staatliche Kunstkommission* (Stakuko; the state commission for art), which operated under the cultural arm of the SED, and the VDK, the composers' union, sought to address how music could reflect the social realities of the East German people and contribute to the construction of a new, socialist culture.²⁶ Following the SED's November 1951 declaration that it would seek firmer control over all artistic matters (less than four months after the formation of the VDK), the two associations embarked on a collaborative effort, albeit one fraught with conflict, to define socialist realism more clearly.²⁷

By 1952, the Stakuko²⁸ and VDK²⁹ had each released separate guidelines about socialist realism in music. The Stakuko's guidelines focused primarily on the avoidance of

25 For more information about the content of these guidelines, as well as their application and adoption into art music of the GDR, see Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek, *Socialist Realism and Music* (Prague: Institute of Musicology, Masaryk University, 2004); Tatjana Böhme-Mehner, 'Provincialism, Modernity, and the Classical Heritage: The Administrative Structure of the GDR and the Situation of Music Production', in *Classical Music in the German Democratic Republic: Production and Reception*, ed. Kyle Frackman and Larson Powell (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2015), 20–33; Heinz Alfred Brockhaus and Konrad Niemann, *Musikgeschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1945-1976* (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1979); Golan Gur, 'Classicism as Anti-Fascist Heritage: Realism and Myth in Ernst Hermann Meyer's Mansfelder Oratorium (1950)', in *Classical Music in the German Democratic Republic*, 34–57; Manfred Jäger, *Kultur und Politik in der DDR: Ein historischer Abriss* (Köln: Edition Deutschland Archiv, 1982); Inge Geissler Jens, *Zwischen Diskussion und Disziplin: Dokumente zur Geschichte der Akademie der Künste (Ost) 1945/1950 bis 1993* (Berlin: Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste: Henschel, 1997); Toby Thacker, "'Anleitung und Kontrolle": Stakuko and the Censorship of Music in the GDR, 1951–1953', *Critical Studies*, 22/1 (Oct. 2001): 87–110; David G. Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line: Music and Politics in Early Cold War Poland and East Germany* (Purdue, IN: Purdue University Press, 2013); Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR*.

26 It is notable that unlike the morally ambiguous, or reprehensible, pasts of many GDR political elite, the composers and musicologists who held positions of power in the VDK had either been imprisoned or fled the country during the Third Reich, with the exception of Karl Laux, whose career continued on from the Third Reich through the GDR. A list of members of the Berlin chapter of the VDK in 1950 and 1951 can be found in the *Akademie der Künste Archiv* (henceforth AdK) in Berlin. 'Information Landesverband Berlin', Call No. VKM 150, AdK.

27 The Stakuko's music department was headed by former avant-garde poet Rudolf Hartig and comprised primarily members who had no advanced musical training.

28 The Stakuko had charged a group of VDK members from Saxony with the creation of a brochure entitled 'Arbeits- und Studienmaterial zur Frage des Formalismus und Realismus' (Working and Study Material on the Question of Formalism and Realism). Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR*, 86.

29 The VDK members of Berlin responded with a critical article in *Musik und Gesellschaft*, writing that 'Die breite Entfaltung einer Diskussion über Fragen des Realismus ist nach dem Erscheinen der Broschüre doppelt wichtig, weil seit dem Beschluss der II. Parteikonferenz der SED die Verwirklichung

formalism through articulating specific content-related and compositional techniques, such as serialism or individually focused content that were considered formalist. Conversely, the VDK encouraged composers to strive for socialist-realist music through guidelines that promoted socially minded compositions written in an aurally accessible manner.³⁰

VDK Article on Socialist Realism

1. Reflection of social reality;
2. Connectedness with the people,
 - a. intelligible to everyone,
 - b. on a national basis;
3. Recognition of the role of the national cultural heritage;
4. Recovery and development of the national cultural heritage;
5. The fusing of high ideal content with artistic mastery of form (Zhdanov).³¹

Stakuko Brochure against Formalism

1. Subjectivism in the form of extreme individualism;
2. Cosmopolitanism;
3. Affected artifice and constructivism;
4. Naturalism;
5. Primitivism;
6. Decadence.³²

des sozialistischen Realismus in der deutschen Musik zu einer dringenden Forderung geworden ist' (The broad development of a discussion on questions of realism is doubly important after the publication of the brochure, because the realization of socialist realism in German music is an urgent demand following the decision of the Second Party Conference of the SED.) Nathan Notowicz and Eberhard Rebling, 'Zur Frage des Realismus und Formalismus: Kritische Bemerkungen zu einer Broschüre' (On the Question of Formalism and Realism: Critical Remarks on an Brochure), *Musik und Gesellschaft*, 9 (1952), 7.

- ³⁰ The VDK's encouragement of composers to learn how to compose in a socialist realist manner reflects Eisler's impulse to education. They believed that 'ein Komponist, der sein Handwerk nicht beherrscht, ist darum noch kein Formalist, sondern einfach ein Stümper. Seine Musik ist auch nicht primitivisch im Sinne des Formalismus, sondern sie ist primitiv, ungekonnt.' (a composer who has not mastered his craft is therefore not yet a formalist, but simply a bungler. His music is also not primitive in the sense of formalism, but rather primitive, unskilled), Nathan Notowicz and Eberhard Rebling, 'Zur Frage des Realismus und Formalismus', 7.
- ³¹ '1. Widerspiegelung der gesellschaftlichen Wahrheit; 2. Volksverbundenheit, a. Allgemeinverständlichkeit, b. Volksverbundenheit auf nationaler Grundlage; 3. Anerkennung der Rolle des nationalen Kulturerbes; 4. Verwertung und Weiterentwicklung des nationalen Kulturerbes; 5. Verbindung von hohem Ideengehalt mit künstlerischer Meisterschaft der Form (Shdanow).' Nathan Notowicz and Eberhard Rebling, 'Zur Frage des Realismus und Formalismus', 12.
- ³² '1. Subjektivismus in der Form des extremen Individualismus; 2. Kosmopolitismus; 3. Artismus und Konstruktivismus; 4. Naturalismus; 5. Primitivismus; 6. Dekadenz.' Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR*, 86.

The conflicting guidelines surrounding socialist realism allowed composers like Eisler to create works that were simultaneously acceptable and unacceptable, depending on interpretation and framing and which organization was offering the evaluation.

Despite these apparent differences in approaches, when the qualities the Stakuko argued should avoid are juxtaposed with the VDK's instructions, a clearer picture of their main tenets emerges. The following list highlights the congruencies in the VDK and Stakuko's principles:

- Avoidance of subjectivism in the form of extreme individualism in favour of the reflection of social reality.
- Avoidance of cosmopolitanism through the display of national character.
- Awareness of national cultural heritage and its effect on the future of music.
- Avoidance of constructivism, primitivism, and naturalism.

Thus, while the Stakuko's suggestions for avoiding formalism dictate what should *not* be done, the VDK's statements provide contextualization that gives us an idea of what *should* be done. During the VDK and Stakuko debates over the rhetorical manifestations of the above qualities, the two organizations collaborated on a music festival that was to serve as a display of musical socialist realism. The concerts of the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* were meant to provide all East Germans (from audience members, to composers, and politicians) with examples of how socialist realism was to sound and how music should function in a socialist society.³³ The 1952 *Festtage* thus represented what those in the Stakuko and VDK believed to be a successful translation of theory into practice, wherein the compositions performed could be understood as models for the future of socialist realism. Eisler's contribution to the festival programme *Das Vorbild*, would ultimately live up to its name – the example – and serve as a literal example of socialist realism during the 1952 *Festtage*.³⁴

33 Mention of the 1952 *Festtage* first appears in the Stakuko's yearly plan for 1952, which was created in November 1951, alongside the statement that 'Musikfeste dienen der Förderung fortschrittlicher Musiker und der Werke der Meister realistischer Musik.' (Music festivals serve to promote progressive musicians and works by masters of realist music). 'Arbeitsplan der Staatlichen Kommission für Kunstangelegenheiten für das Jahr 1952', 9 November 1951, in 'Struktur- und Stellenplane, Personal, Verwaltung', Slide Nos. 980–1007, Call No. DR 1/20, BArch.

34 Each of the works that the VDK ultimately proposed as an example of socialist realism was also vetted by the Stakuko before being added to the programme. Stakuko member Hans-Georg Uszkoreit and the VDK's Nathan Notowicz (composer, musicologist and First Secretary in the VDK) coordinated these inter-organizational efforts. Many of the Stakuko documents pertaining to the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* are available in the Lichterfelde Bundesarchiv (henceforth BArch). 'Arbeits-, Kollektiv- und Dienstbesprechungen, Tagungen der Stakuko und im Bereich der Abt./HA Musik', Slide No. 1246, Vol. 2, Call No. Dr 1/6198, BArch.

The VDK began to solicit suggestions for works to be performed in a bulletin distributed on 26 January 1952, but nearly six months passed before Eisler became involved.³⁵ Archival documents related to the VDK and Stakuko planning meetings about the festival reveal that on 14 July 1952, Fritz Möller, the VDK's executive secretary, wrote to Eisler requesting that he submit three compositions for the 1952 *Festtage* and specifically requested *Das Vorbild*.³⁶ Eisler rejected Möller's request, writing: 'I ask you to take note that this time no works of mine will be performed.'³⁷ Eisler cited his involvement in a student concert, which was to take place during the festival, as an obstacle for his own participation and suggested that a work by a student be submitted instead. Despite Eisler's plea to Möller, a 6 August letter from Möller reminded Eisler that the joint selection committee had already informed him that several of his works had been selected, including *Das Vorbild* (entitled 'Tryptichon' at the time). The process through which Eisler came to submit *Das Vorbild* illuminates the accusations of favouritism that would follow the festival. The exchange of letters between Eisler and Möller, however, underscores the extent to which the VDK is culpable of the very favouritism they decried by brushing aside Eisler's suggestion that a student composition be performed.

Because of Möller's external pressure, Eisler had no choice but to submit the work and fulfil an additional request:

It would also be interesting to know how you relate to the development of German music making, in general, and how you relate to the development of a musical creation in the method of socialist realism.³⁸

Eisler was thus put in the position to justify how his submission was an example of socialist realism for the VDK, Stakuko, and festival audiences. The programme notes, however, would make no mention of socialism, instead, they would describe *Das Vorbild*'s humanistic content and representation of Goethe; it is unclear whether this was a conscious choice on the part of Eisler or merely an editorial decision made during the programme publication process.³⁹ This attention to the historical positioning rather than

35 'Einladung zu verbandinternen Veranstaltungen', Call No. VKM 159, AdK.

36 Möller had heard an earlier version of *Das Vorbild* – entitled at the time *Über den Frieden* – on an April 1952 radio programme broadcast from Leipzig. The version that Möller requested contained a different second movement. The genesis of *Das Vorbild* is explained in full later in this article. Möller, Letter to Eisler 14 July 1952, Call No. HEA 8076, AdK.

37 'Ich bitte Euch also zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, dass dies Mal von mir nichts aufgeführt wird.' Eisler, Letter to Möller 18 July 1952, Call No. HEA 8076, AdK.

38 'Interessant dürfte auch sein, wie Sie zu der Entwicklung des deutschen Musikschaftens im allgemeine stehen und wie Sie sich verhalten zur Entwicklung eines Musikschaftens mit der Methode des sozialistischen Realismus.' Möller, Letter to Eisler, 6 August 1952, Call No. HEA 8076, AdK.

39 The programme notes state, for example, 'Die Rhythmen der Sprache läßt Eisler in einer schönen Des-Dur-Melodie frei anschwingen, um den gedankenreichen Inhalt ungehindert zum Ausdruck kommen

contextualizing it within a socialist society likely contributed to criticisms of formalism by members of the VDK following the festival. That is, without knowledge of Eisler's educational impulse, how it is rooted in Marxist thought, and consequently how the work contributes to the construction of socialism, *Das Vorbild* was ripe for misinterpretation.

This correspondence between Eisler and Möller has not received attention in previous discussions of *Das Vorbild*. The nuance they add demands a comprehensive re-evaluation of the work. Furthermore, because the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* and its contribution to the definition of socialist realism has fallen outside the scope of scholarship on *Das Vorbild*, documents show the Stakuko's and VDK's insistence on including the work in the festival and their joint efforts to frame *Das Vorbild* – and the entirety of Eisler's compositional output in the GDR – under the label of socialist realism have largely been overlooked. As Daniel Zur Weihen has demonstrated, the majority of Stakuko and VDK criticism about *Das Vorbild* in fact centred on Eisler receiving preferential treatment as a result of his close relationship with music critics.⁴⁰ Considered as exerting an unfair amount of influence over audiences as a result of this favouritism, Eisler's standing, in turn, influenced the reception of *Das Vorbild*. Criticism of Eisler via *Das Vorbild* has subsequently dominated discourse surrounding the composition, whereby scholars such as Arnold Pistiak and Heidi Hart argue that its lasting legacy is negative; however, meeting minutes from the planning of the festival and newspaper reviews of the festival reveal a more nuanced history of the work and its reception.⁴¹ Reanalysing the work with these new documents in mind reveals how Eisler sought to use music to educate audience members, musicians, and composers alike about social issues through music – an educational impulse that extends back to the 1920s.

Das Vorbild in the GDR

Eisler composed the final version of *Das Vorbild* with the principles of the 'Aufbau des Sozialismus' (building of socialism) in mind. Originally titled *Über den Frieden* (On Peace), the first iteration of the triptych was premiered on 23 March 1952 on the radio.

zu lassen. Die sehr sparsame, aber außerordentlich ausgewogene Orchesterbegleitung mündet bei dem Schlußsatz 'Wir heißen euch hoffen' mit einer leisen Flöten-Melodie in ein zart ausklingendes Nachspiel. Die meisterhafte musikalische Gestaltung ist für den Komponisten in diesem dreiteiligen Werk das Mittel, dem Humanismus Goethes ein klingendes Denkmal zu setzen' (The rhythm of the language allows Eisler to oscillate freely in a beautiful D-flat melody that lets the thoughtful content be expressed unhindered. The very sparing, but exceptionally well-balanced orchestral accompaniment leads to the final phrase of 'We bid you hope', with a soft flute melody in a delicately dying away conclusion. The masterly musical setting is for the composer of this work in three movements the means to erect a sounding monument to Goethe's humanism). Programme notes for the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik*, Call No. HEA 3339, AdK.

⁴⁰ Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR*, 124–99.

⁴¹ Hart, *Hanns Eisler's Art Songs*, 129–38; Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?*, 34–53.

Although all four versions of *Das Vorbild* were triptychs comprised of three stylistically distinct movements, this March 1952 version contained a different second movement. Eisler was later inspired to replace the second movement, 'Friedenslied' with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poem 'Das Göttliche'. In a 13 August 1952 letter to playwright Bertolt Brecht, Eisler articulated the inspiration:

I revise my Tryptichon; I just have to take out the 'Friedenslied' and put it somewhere else because it does not fit in musically. I am replacing it with another Goethe-fragment ('Edel sei der Mensch, hilfreich und gut'). That really resounds with the building of socialism and gives the whole work its name: *Vorbild*.⁴²

The text of the new second movement contains a hint to the overall socialist spirit of *Das Vorbild* in its last strophe:

Der edle Mensch,	The noble man
Sei hilfreich und gut!	Be charitable and good!
Unermüdet schaff er	Be tireless in making
Das Nützliche, Rechte,	The useful, the right.
Sei uns ein Vorbild	Be to us model
Jener geahnten Wesen ⁴³	Of those foreshadowed beings!

Just as the 'noble man' of 'Das Göttliche' was to serve as an example for all humans, the new appellation for the work demonstrates that *Das Vorbild* was to serve as an example for socialist realism within the context of the 1952 *Festtage*. Eisler's use of the quintessentially East German phrase 'Aufbau des Sozialismus' in his letter to Brecht is notable and intriguing in itself, but the timing of Eisler's choice to replace the second movement with the text by Goethe proves more significant. As the festival documents reveal, Eisler's decision to replace the second movement occurred shortly after the 6 August letter from Möller in which he was reminded that the work had already been chosen by the selection committee.⁴⁴ This timing indicates that *Das Vorbild* can instead be read as a work intended as a statement for the festival and thus exemplifies Eisler's desire to take part in the construction of a new socialist musical culture.

Analysing the music and text of *Das Vorbild* through the lens of Eisler's educational impulses, while simultaneously taking into consideration the tenets of socialist realism

42 'Ich arbeite mein Tryptichon um; das Friedenslied muß ich doch herausnehmen und wo anders hingeben denn es passt musikalisch nicht hinein. Ich ersetze es durch ein anderes Goethefragment ("Edel sei der Mensch, hilfreich und gut"). Das klingt wieder beim Aufbau des Sozialismus und nenne das Ganze: *Vorbild*.' Hanns Eisler, 'Correspondence with Brecht', 13 August, 1952, Call No. HEA 5748, AdK.

43 Eisler, 'Das Vorbild: Triptychon für Altosolo und Orchester nach Texten von Goethe.'

44 Möller, letter to Eisler 6 August 1952, Call No. HEA 8076, AdK.

promoted in the 1952 *Festtage* reveals the ways in which Eisler negotiated his personal compositional ideology within the political environment of the GDR. *Das Vorbild* makes apparent Eisler's desire for music to serve multiple educational purposes:

1. Educating his audience about music and therefore facilitating a comprehension of musical form and content.
2. Providing a historical context that is grounded in German musical culture.
3. Providing compositional models that his composition students could use to guide their own compositions.

To do this, *Das Vorbild* introduces the audience to four distinct styles of music – a fugue, a recitative, a folk song, and a pastoral symphony – in a straightforward manner through which there are limited possibilities for confusion or alternative interpretations. As this analysis will show, the musical variety in *Das Vorbild* is achieved through stylistic allusions to 'den größten Meistern der Vergangenheit', such as Bach and Handel.⁴⁵ Ultimately, understanding how Eisler's educational impulse promotes the use of imitation, and how stylistic allusions to prominent composers facilitate musical, cultural, and social lessons reveals congruencies with the musical and social goals of the GDR.

The first educational lesson in *Das Vorbild* came in the form of an allusion to a Bach-like fugue. Eisler had originally composed this movement as a stand-alone work for the 1947 Jean Renoir film, *The Woman on the Beach*.⁴⁶ He recycled the work for the first movement of the triptych, which he would title 'Fuge'.⁴⁷ Ex. 1 presents a piano reduction of bars 1–10 in Eisler's 'Fuge', where the viola introduces the fugue's subject (bb. 1–8). As both Hart and Pistiak have noted, this resembles Bach's *Fugue in G Minor* (BWV 861; ex. 2).⁴⁸

Ruhig (♩)

Ex. 1. Bach quoted in 'Fuge', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 1–9.⁴⁹

45 For a recording of *Das Vorbild*, see: Hanns Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, Annelies Burmeister with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Adolf Fritz Guhl, Berlin Classics 0092342BC, 1996, CD.

46 Jean Renoir, *The Woman on the Beach* (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1947).

47 Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?*, 35.

48 Hart, *Hanns Eisler's Art Songs*, 129–38; Arnold Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?*, 36.

49 All *Das Vorbild* transcriptions courtesy of Anna Rose Nelson. Original score from Hanns Eisler, 'Das Vorbild: Triptychon für Altosolo und Orchester nach Texten von Goethe' (VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1970).



Ex. 2. Subject of the fugue in Bach, Fugue in G Minor, BWV 861, bb. 1–2.⁵⁰

Both composers, for example, begin with similar melodic gestures that move toward the tonic. Eisler solidified the similarities with clear rhythmic parallels to Bach's fugue, wherein points of tonicization are emphasized through longer rhythmic values. Although Eisler's fugue does not adhere to the same principles of tonal harmony that are exemplified in Bach's, the overall melodic contour of both subjects bears a striking resemblance to one another that is amplified through the rhythmic similarities and pacing of the phrase.

Eisler's adaption of the Bach fugue provides a more aurally accessible interpretation of the original subject. Rather than immediately providing the answer to the subject, Eisler extends the subject through a repetitive melodic sequence (Ex. 3). This transitional sequence functions to ease the listener into the second statement of the subject, which enters in measure seven. The repetitive nature of these sequences creates a moment of pause for the listener before new melodic material is introduced. This effort to aurally guide the audience through the fugue recalls Eisler's educational impulse as it is reflected in his aforementioned 1927 essay, 'Musik und Musikverständnis', wherein he describes the music of a composer like Bach as being inaccessible to the audience without musical education. The aural pause that Eisler composes into 'Fuge', thus can be understood as functioning to make 'the art of inner-musical development' of the fugue apparent by marking the subject distinct from the answer and providing the listeners with an example of the melodic idea that they will hear repeatedly throughout the fugue.⁵¹ In doing so, 'Fuge' becomes more accessible to the amateur listener who may have entered the concert hall with so little musical knowledge that they could only hope to understand the emotional affect of a composition without guidance. Whereas the other two movements of *Das Vorbild* contain texts that can guide listeners' interpretation of the musical content, the repetition and sequencing in 'Fuge' assists the listener without text. This technique not only serves Eisler's educational goals, but also reflects the aspects of socialist realism espoused by the VDK and Stakuko that advocate for music that is relevant to the situation of the presumed 'musically illiterate' listener.

⁵⁰ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Fuge in G Minor, BWV 861*, vol. 14, Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1866).

⁵¹ 'die Art der inner-musikalischen Entwicklung'; Eisler, 'Muß der Musikfreund etwas von Musiktheorie Wissen [1925]', in *Eisler. Gesammelte Schriften 1921–1935*, 30–33, at 31.



Ex. 3. Transitional sequence in 'Fuge', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 1–9.

The second and third movements of *Das Vorbild* feature texts by Goethe that make explicit the social lessons to be learned from the work. In juxtaposing the textless fugue alongside two other texted movements, *Das Vorbild* strives to achieve the goals that Eisler outlined in his 1951 essay 'Musik in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik'. Namely, *Das Vorbild* uses products of 'the great classical artistic period'⁵² in a manner that provides social relevance to the East German audience, whose knowledge of Goethe and Bach was bolstered by these figures' connections to the cities of Weimar and Leipzig, located within the boundaries of the GDR. By situating the spectre of Bach alongside Goethe, Eisler capitalizes on the audience's awareness of these figures in order to establish a relationship between the past and present.

The second movement, 'Arie', continues *Das Vorbild's* lesson in German cultural history through the use of Goethe's poem 'Das Göttliche' (The Divine) (1783), which Eisler altered to convey a message applicable to the social and political conditions of the 1952 *Festtage's* audience. As previously mentioned in the discussion of Eisler's letter to Brecht, Eisler chose to call the poem 'Edel sei der Mensch' (Let Man be Noble) rather than its title 'Das Göttliche'. This was the first in a series of secularizing alterations through which Eisler readied the text for a socialist society.

Eisler eliminated several strophes from Goethe's original, all of which contain explicit references to spiritual powers (see Figure 1). These alterations facilitate compliance of the work with the stance of the GDR, wherein goodness comes from the individual rather than potentially oppressive religion. Absent such spiritual allusions, 'Arie' becomes directly applicable to the lives of East German citizens, providing them with a description of conduct that aligns with goals of the socialist state. The first two strophes (of Eisler's reduction) serve to separate the individual from nature, while the third demonstrates the qualities that man possesses. In doing so, the text places the power to change within the hands of humans – something that is integral to the concept of the 'Aufbau des Sozialismus'. The fourth strophe attains relevance to a socialist society by making explicit the individual's ability to unite with others under a common cause. As previously referenced in Eisler's letter to Brecht, the last strophe identifies the qualities of the 'edle Mensch' as attributes for which all should strive – generosity, devotion, equality, and goodness – and which are qualities necessary for the establishment of a functioning socialist society.

⁵² 'der großen klassischen Kunstperiode'; Eisler, 'Musik in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik', 147.

Eisler's Adaptation	English Translation	Goethe's Text
<p>Edel sei der Mensch Hilfreich und gut! Denn das allein Unterscheidet ihn Von allen Wesen, Die wir kennen.</p>	<p>Noble be man, Charitable and good. Since that alone Distinguishes him From other existences Which we know well.</p>	<p>Edel sei der Mensch Hilfreich und gut! Denn das allein Unterscheidet ihn Von allen Wesen, Die wir kennen.</p>
	<p>Hail to those unknown Exalted beings Whom we forbode. Let man resemble them; His example teach us To hold their faith.</p>	<p>Heil den unbekanntem Höhem Wesen Die wir ahnen! Ihnen gleiche der Mensch! Sein Beispiel lehr' uns Jene glauben.</p>
<p>Denn unführend Denn unführend Ist die Natur: Es leuchtet die Sonne Über Bös und Gute Und dem Verbrecher Glänzen wie dem Besten der Mond und die Sterne.</p>	<p>For nature remains Forever unfeeling: The sun shines down on Evil and good men And moon and stars Glitter on criminals As on those who are best.</p>	<p>Denn unführend Ist die Natur: Es leuchtet die Sonne Über Bös und Gute Und dem Verbrecher Glänzen wie dem Besten der Mond und die Sterne.</p>
<p>Wind und Ströme, Donner und Hagel Rauschen ihren Weg Und ergreifen Vorüber eilend Einen um den andern.</p>	<p>Wind and rivers, Thunder and hailstones Rush on their courses And, hurrying onwards, They seize on and tear down One as the other.</p>	<p>Wind und Ströme, Donner und Hagel Rauschen ihren Weg Und ergreifen Vorüber eilend Einen um den andern.</p>
<p>Auch so das Glück Tappt unter die Menge, Faßt bald des Knaben Lockige Unschuld, Bald auch den kahlen Schuldigen Scheitel.</p>	<p>Thus also does fortune Fumble among men, Now taking the innocent Curly-haired lad, but Soon also the bald Guilt-laden skull.</p>	<p>Auch so das Glück Tappt unter die Menge, Faßt bald des Knaben Lockige Unschuld, Bald auch den kahlen Schuldigen Scheitel.</p>
	<p>Each one of us must, Accepting eternal Great, iron laws, Accomplish the circle Of his existence.</p>	<p>Nach ewigen, ehrnen, Großen Gesetzen Müssen wir alle Unseres Daseins Kreise vollenden.</p>

Nur allein der Mensch Vermag das Unmögliche: Er unterscheidet, Wählet und richtet; Er kann dem Augenblick Dauer verleihen.	But man and man only Can do the impossible: He distinguishes Chooses and judges. He can lend lastingness To the single moment.	Nur allein der Mensch Vermag das Unmögliche: Er unterscheidet, Wählet und richtet; Er kann dem Augenblick Dauer verleihen.
Er allein darf Den Guten lohnen, Den Bösen strafen, Heilen und retten, Alles Irrende, Schweifende Nützlich verbinden.	He alone may Reward the good, Punish the evil Heal and be saviour Bind to his uses The erring, the drifting.	Er allein darf Den Guten lohnen, Den Bösen strafen, Heilen und retten, Alles Irrende, Schweifende Nützlich verbinden.
	And we pay honour To the immortal ones As though they were men, Who did in their great deeds What the best, in their small ones, Do or would do.	Und wir verehren Die Unsterblichen, Als wären sie Menschen, Täten im großen, Was der Beste im kleinen Tut oder möchte.
Der edle Mensch Sei hilfreich und gut! Unermüdet schaff er Das Nützliche, Rechte, Sei uns ein Vorbild Jener geahneten Wesen.	The noble man Be charitable and good! Be tireless in making The useful, the right. Be to us model Of those foreshadowed beings!	Der edle Mensch Sei hilfreich und gut! Unermüdet schaff er Das Nützliche, Rechte, Sei uns ein Vorbild Jener geahneten Wesen.

Fig.1. Mvt. 2 'Arie': Eisler's edited version of 'Das Göttliche', renamed as 'Edel sei der Mensch' alongside Goethe's original.⁵³

Eisler's method of setting the text reinforces the message he has crafted through his alterations of 'Das Göttliche.' The texture of 'Arie' resembles that of an accompanied recitative.⁵⁴ As can be seen in bars 40–44 (Ex. 4), whenever the vocal part sounds, the instrumental accompaniment has a slow harmonic rhythm that stands in stark contrast to more active vocal line. Upon the conclusion of a vocal phrase, the accompaniment provides a more rhythmically active punctuation. These choices ultimately create a stylistic reference to a recitative, providing the audience with the opportunity to engage with a second compositional style in an accessible manner.

53 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Thomas Mann, trans. Stephen Spender, 'Noble Be Man', *The Permanent Goethe*, The Permanent Library Series (New York: Dial Press, 1948), 19–20.

54 The editor of the published version of *Das Vorbild*, Manfred Grabs, declared the 'Arie' to be similar to a recitative as well. Eisler, 'Das Vorbild: Triptychon für Altosolo und Orchester nach Texten von Goethe', back cover.

40

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Horn in F 1

Horn in F 2

Alto

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

stra - fen, hei - len und ret - ten, al - les Ir - ren - de, Schwei - fen - de nütz - lich ver - bin - den.

p

p

p

p

pp

pp

ppp sul tasto

ppp sul tasto

ppp sul tasto

p dolce

Ex. 4. Recitative-like setting of text in 'Arie', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 40–44.

The alternation of melodic and rhythmic activity between the vocalist and instrumentalists facilitates a listening environment in which the attention of the listener is directed to the text. The listener, who is afforded the opportunity to concentrate on the text, is provided with clarity through the rhythmic stylization of the text. Eisler's text setting is such that it mimics normal speech patterns, solidifying the relationship between the text and the melodic line, ensuring that the two cannot be separated.⁵⁵ The first five bars of 'Arie' furnish an example of this unity. In this sketch (Ex. 5), Eisler's attempt to emphasize the word 'Gute' can be seen through the revised bar lines and altered metres proposed for bars 14 to 16, where he wrote over the existing bar lines with longer vertical lines to indicate potential new metric phrasing. Although these changes did not endure further revisions, they demonstrate the attention that Eisler paid to the metrical setting of the text and give insight into the decisions that informed the published version.

Ex. 5. Transcribed sketch of 'Arie', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 12–17.⁵⁶

Ex. 6. Soprano line in 'Arie', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 1–5.

Eisler's attention to the rhythmic setting of the text can be observed through his emphasis the words 'Mensch', 'hilfreich', and 'gut' by giving them longer rhythmic values (Ex. 6). The intentionality of the emphasis created is evident in the sketches of the movement. Eisler's text setting in this movement thus demonstrates the care he took to clearly communicate the ideals he found to be so important in 'Das Göttliche': namely that it

⁵⁵ Eisler believed that 'Die Dichtung verändert sich, wenn sie gesungen wird, und die Musik verändert sich, wenn sie Worte singt. Text und Musik schlagen aus ihrer eigenen Qualität in eine neue Einheit um und sind nicht bloß eine Summation von zwei Kunstgattungen.' (The text changes when it is sung and the music changes when it sings words. Text and music turn their individual qualities into a new unity and not merely into a summation of the two art forms.) Eisler '[Einiges über das Verhältnis von Text und Musik II] [1950]', *Eisler. Schriften 1948–1962*, 98–105, at 99.

⁵⁶ Transcription by the author. Sketches, *Das Vorbild*, HEA 460.

is within the power of man to engage in conduct that could aid in the construction of a socialist society. By making these values aurally evident to the audience, Eisler was therefore able to turn the concert into an educational setting wherein his audience could learn about the qualities of personal conduct that were valued in the GDR.

In the third movement, 'Symbolum', Eisler draws on another of Goethe's poems, likewise entitled 'Symbolum' (1813).⁵⁷ In the original, Goethe writes of a freemason's work towards changing and improving the world around him. Again, Eisler adapted the text by eliminating strophes, but this time, his alteration of certain pronouns also comes to have a significant effect on the text's meaning (Figure 2). In removing first-person 'ich' and replacing it with 'wir' (we) throughout this movement, Eisler eliminated any traces of individualism. As in 'Arie', his changes also remove allusions to divine power and freemasonry, firmly placing the secular individual, who is not a part of an elite, secret society, as the enactor of social change. These alterations allow for an interpretation of the text that indicates a direct tie to the building of a socialist society and are reflective of Eisler's educational impulses.

Comprehension of the text in 'Symbolum' is aided by the movement's close imitation of a *Volkslied*. Its repetitive and easily discernible form resembles Eisler's compositional choices in his recently completed *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* [New German Folksongs] (1950/1951), which was a contemporary collection of *Volkslieder* of Eisler's own invention. In both *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* and 'Symbolum', the vocal line is joined by a subdued accompaniment that avoids overshadowing the text. The almost Schubertian qualities of *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* are also present in 'Symbolum', where the harmonic affect supports the emotional content of the text. Yet, unlike the *Neue deutsche Volkslieder*, which was given as an example of 'Primitivism' in the Stakoko brochure on socialist realism in music, 'Symbolum' avoided criticism.⁵⁸

The *Volkslied*-like setting of the text within 'Symbolum' provides a third style of composition with which the audience may gain familiarity by expanding the number of opportunities to learn through listening. Like the first and second movements of *Das Vorbild*, Eisler added moments of pause to 'Symbolum' by concluding each phrase of text with a repetition of octave D-flats to allow the listener to comprehend the musical rhetoric (Ex. 7). The seven repetitions of this dramatic octave motive throughout 'Symbolum' gives the listener time to process the melodic and textual content, signalling that the phrase they just heard has concluded. The exact location of these moments can be seen in Fig. 2, where asterisks mark pauses between phrases. The audience would thus,

57 Unlike the second movement, 'Symbolum' remained a part of *Das Vorbild/Über den Frieden* throughout nearly every version, with the exception of one 1952 manuscript. In this sketch, Eisler removed 'Symbolum' and replaced it with the 'Arie', while retaining 'Friedenslied' for the second movement. This edit, however, did not appear in any subsequent manuscripts, nor was it performed. The revision history of 'Symbolum' also differs from both 'Arie'/'Edel sei der Mensch' and 'Fuge' in that Eisler does not indicate that he intended it for any other work.

58 Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR*, 86.

Eisler's Adaptation	English Translation	Goethe's Original
Des <i>Mannes</i> Wandeln, Es gleicht dem Leben, Und sein Bestreben, Es gleicht dem Handeln Der Menschen auf Erden Auf Erden. ***	The mason's [man's] ways Are a symbol of life, And his toil Resembles the strife Of man on earth.	Des Maurers Wandeln, Es gleicht dem Leben, Und sein Bestreben, Es gleicht dem Handeln Der Menschen auf Erden.
Die Zukunft decket Schmerzen und Glücke Schrittweis dem Blicke; Doch ungeschreckt Dringen wir vorwärts Wir vorwärts. ***	The future hides Gladness and sorrow; Stepwise to the sight, Yet undaunted, Ever on we press.	Die Zukunft decket Schmerzen und Glücke Schrittweis dem Blicke; Doch ungeschreckt Dringen wir vorwärts
Und schwer und <i>schwerer</i> Hängt eine Hülle, Mit Ehrfurcht, stille Ruh'n oben die Sterne Und unten die Gräber. ***	Heavy and far-off [heavier], With reverence. Hangs the veil. Silent above rest the stars Silent below the graves!	Und schwer und ferne Hängt eine Hülle, Mit Ehrfurcht, stille Ruh'n oben die Sterne Und unten die Gräber.
Betracht' sie genauer Und siehe, so melden Im Busen der Helden Sich wandelnde Schauer Und ernste Und ernste Gefühle. ***	Consider and behold; For, lo! there rise. In the breasts of heroes, Ever-changing awe [And earnest] And earnest feeling.	Betracht' sie genauer Und siehe, so melden Im Busen der Helden Sich wandelnde Schauer Und ernste Gefühle.
Doch rufen von drüben Die Stimmen der Geister, Die Stimmen der Meister: <i>Vergeßt</i> nicht zu üben, Die Kräfte des Guten! ***	From yonder call Voices of sages — Voices of masters: Delay [forget] not to use The heritage of the good!	Doch rufen von drüben Die Stimmen der Geister, Die Stimmen der Meister: Versäumt nicht zu üben, Die Kräfte des Guten!
Hier <i>flechten</i> sich Kronen In ewiger Stille, Die sollen mit Fülle Die Tätigen lohnen! Wir heißen euch hoffen Wir heißen euch hoffen Wir heißen euch hoffen	Here are a weaving, In silence eternal, Crowns that with fullness Shall the active reward! We command thee to hope!	Hier winden sich Kronen In ewiger Stille, Die sollen mit Fülle Die Tätigen lohnen! Wir heißen euch hoffen.

Fig. 2. Mvt. 3 'Symbolum': Eisler's edited version of 'Symbolum' alongside Goethe's original.⁵⁹

59 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Frederic Rowland Marvin, trans. Frederic Rowland Marvin, *Poems and Translations* (Troy, N.Y., 1907), 142-43.

theoretically, be given the opportunity to consider how the text may be translated into lessons of forward progress and unwavering commitment that are applicable to their own lives – an action that would have been wholly supported within the GDR.

Ex. 7. Three D-flats at the end of a section in 'Symbolum', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 12–14.

Alongside the text's explicit connection to the building of a socialist society, Eisler provided for his audience additional introductions to the musical past. The movement's (and work's) dualistic presence in the past and present is cemented in the last melodic statement of *Das Vorbild* when an oboe *obligato* reminiscent of the Classical era ushers in the closing statement after the soprano completes the phrase 'wir heißen euch hoffen!' (Ex. 8). This decision thus positions the listener with an aural connection to their cultural heritage and gives well-wishes for the work that must be done in the future to build a socialist society.

Rasche \downarrow (a tempo)

Ob.

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

p

mf

pizz.

mf

mf

Ex. 8. Oboe solo and horn sequence in 'Symbolum', Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, bb. 72–85.

The work closes with this striking descending sequence in the horn part played over a sustained tonic, allowing the movement most firmly rooted in tonal harmony to conclude with a perfect authentic cadence. Much like the allusion to Bach's BWV 861 in the 'Fuge' movement, Eisler harkens to an earlier compositional style in this phrase, this time to the eighteenth century through the closing statement that hints at another 'German' composer, Handel. This statement is reminiscent of the end of G.F. Handel's 'Pastoral Symphony' from *Messiah* due to the texture, the sequence of ascending phrases that ultimately leap down, and the slow-moving bass line that guides the composition to a conclusion while the melodies explore the tonal space before reaching a cadence (Ex. 9).

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is for Violino I, Violino III, and all'ottavia I. The middle staff is for Violino II and Viola all'ottavia II. The bottom staff is for Bassi. The music is in 12/8 time. The score begins with a measure marked with a '9' above the staff. Trills are indicated by 'tr' above notes in several measures. The piece concludes with a 'Fine' instruction at the end of the bottom staff.

Ex. 9. From Handel's *Messiah*, Mvt. 14, Pifa, bb. 9–11.⁶⁰

Eisler's similar pastoral statement, which is void of the ornamental features of Handel's work, evokes the style of an iconic historic German composer to reflect more broadly on German heritage. The choice to allude to Handel is particularly intriguing, given that Eisler refers to the 'cosmopolitan' nature of Handel's biography, arguing that 'A Marxist has to determine that two of the most important German musicians did not live in Germany, rather they considered themselves international.'⁶¹ This stylistic choice can thus be interpreted as posing a solution to this problem by making Handel's work – as well as the works of other composers who utilize similar stylistic choices – useful for East Germany through the addition of a relevant text and the elimination of trills, syncopation, and other ornate techniques. The audience therefore theoretically learned about conduct in a socialist culture from a text set in a manner that bears resemblance to a folk song, while simultaneously contriving connection to the country's artistic heritage.

Eisler's references to the styles of German composers of the past – fugues, recitatives, folk songs, and pastoral symphonies – demonstrates his continued commitment to the notion that in order for musical progress to be made in the future, the audience must be comfortable with what is currently being performed. Through *Das Vorbild*, Eisler gives his audience a cursory overview of four styles of composition that are essential to German musical history through allusions to multiple composers he admired. Thus, Eisler's educational impulse is observable in the ways in which he sought to provide the audience with an aurally accessible composition with socially and musically educational content.

⁶⁰ Score transcribed by Anna Rose Nelson from: Georg Friedrich Händel, 'Messiah: 1.14: Pifa', in *Georg Friedrich Händels Werke*, vol. 45, ed. Friedrich Chrysander (Leipzig: Deutsche Händelgesellschaft, 1902).

⁶¹ 'Ein Marxist hat festzustellen, daß zwei der größten deutschen Musiker nicht in Deutschland gelebt haben, sondern sich international fühlten.' Eisler, 'Bemerkung zum Entwurf eines Beschlusses des ZK der SED zum 125. Todestag Ludwig van Beethovens [1952]', *Eisler. Schriften 1948–1962*, 194–211, at 196.

After the 1952 Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik

Das Vorbild was immediately heralded as a success in the GDR's state-controlled newspapers, particularly for its educational value and accessible content. Three of the seven reviews of *Das Vorbild* discussed the effective communication of the composition's educational content. Music critic Karl Laux, for example, wrote:

Of Eisler one came to know the triptych, *Das Vorbild*, with words from Goethe. ... In the prelude, consisting of an 'Introduction and Fugue', Eisler demonstrated the mastery of his abilities, which was also put forth in the most beautiful instrumental accompaniment of the 'Aria.' Goethe's words ('Edel sei der Mensch' and 'Symbolum'), with their humanistic qualities, were urgently imparted upon the listener in a manner that was more declamatory than melodic.⁶²

Another review of the concert echoed similar sentiments, with the unknown reviewer praising Eisler's ability to bring the proverbs of Goethe to performance.⁶³ In all, only the meetings between the VDK and Stakuko contained criticism of *Das Vorbild*, yet these discussions have dominated the narrative surrounding the work.⁶⁴ As a result, the reception of *Das Vorbild* and its legacy for the very audience who Eisler sought to educate with the work has been entirely overlooked. *Das Vorbild* would ultimately be performed seven times in the GDR:

Date	Concert Title
23 March 1952	Radio Performance
27 September 1952	<i>Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik</i> (Berlin)
18 April 1953	<i>Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik</i> (Schwerin)
15 October 1959	<i>10. Jahrestag der Republik</i>
16 January 1969	Berliner Sinfonie Orchester
7 July 1978	<i>Hanns-Eisler-Tage der DDR</i> (Lecture/concert)
16 March 1982	<i>Messekonzert – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 150</i>

Fig. 3. Performances of *Das Vorbild* in the GDR.

62 'Von Hanns Eisler lernte man das Triptychon "Das Vorbild" nach Worten von Goethe kennen. ... In diesem Vorspiel bestehend aus Einleitung und Fuge, zeigt Eisler die Meisterschaft seines Könnens, die auch in der instrumentalen Untermalung der Arie schönste Blüten trieb. Die Worte Goethes ('Edel sei der Mensch' und 'Symbolum') mit ihrem humanistischen Inhalt werden in einer mehr deklamatorischen als melodischen Führung dem Hörer eindringlich nachgebracht.' Karl Laux, 'Die neue Thematik der deutschen Musik', HEA 3828.

63 Unknown, 'Konzert mit Werken zeitgenössischer Komponisten', *Berliner Zeitung*, 1 Oct. 1952.

64 Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR*, 160; Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?*, 51–53.

The many praises of *Das Vorbild* and its educational value indicate that Eisler was successful in composing a work that met the Stakuko's and VDK's public needs with regards to socialist realism. Yet Eisler's decision to not account for its socialist content in the programme notes hints to us that the political acceptance of the work was perhaps not the result of a contrived effort on the part of Eisler. The musical and textual content reflects an educational impulse that had been held by Eisler since the mid-1920s. Like in all of the instances where he described compositional methods or approaches, *Das Vorbild* represents his latest attempt to enact his vision for music within the context of particular social and political circumstances.

Conclusion

Situating *Das Vorbild* within the contexts of the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* and his educational impulse presents a starkly different interpretation of the work and its legacy. The debates that occurred between the Stakuko and the VDK – and within each organization – reveal congruencies in the interpretation of socialist realism. These shared goals for socialist realism provide a lens through which *Das Vorbild* can be understood as exemplifying socialist-realist compositional practice. Eisler selected texts that could be applied to the building of socialism and set them to music in a declamatory matter that fulfilled many of the VDK's and Stakuko's demands. Likewise, his choice to quote and imply reference to Bach, Handel, and Goethe exemplifies a connection to the national character and is also building upon it. A more nuanced understanding of Eisler's participation in the creation of a new musical culture becomes apparent following this exploration of how *Das Vorbild* fits in to the ideological goals for music in the GDR. Furthermore, *Das Vorbild* and its contexts provide scholars with a more refined conception of the overlap between his compositional – and pedagogical – methods and philosophies. Identifying the manifestations of his educational impulse *Das Vorbild* highlights the (in)congruencies that existed between the dominant ideology espoused by the state and his personal goals. Indeed, the stress that Eisler placed on learning from composers such as Bach positions his educational impulse as falling well within the party line. Each movement's stylistic allusions serve to give audience members examples through which they can come to understand classical music. Despite the negative legacy of *Das Vorbild* and the criticisms to which Eisler was subject during its premiere, it is clear that this work was an educational example that fulfilled the shared goals of composers and cultural officials in the GDR, providing them with a musical path forward.

Abstract

Situating Hanns Eisler's *Das Vorbild* within the contexts of the 1952 *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* and his educational impulse presents a starkly different interpretation of the work and its legacy. The debates that occurred between the Stakuko and the VDK – and within each organization – reveal (in)congruencies in the interpretation of socialist realism. These shared goals for socialist realism provide a lens through which *Das Vorbild* can be understood as exemplifying socialist-realist compositional practice. Yet, his ideas on educating listeners through music is found throughout his career. *Das Vorbild* and its contexts provide a more refined conception of the overlap between his compositional – and pedagogical – methods and ideas.

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